

A

VISIT TO ITALY.

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'PARIS AND THE PARISIANS;" "VIENNA AND THE AUSTRIANS;"
"DOMESTIC MANNERS OF THE AMERICANS,"
ETC. ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1842.

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A VISIT TO ITALY.

LETTER I.

The House of Michael Angelo, and its Fine Collection of Memorials.

—Anecdote of the Origin of his Picture of the “Fates.”—Deficiency of Church Music.—Legend of Santa Filomena.—Anecdote of a Roman Catholic Preacher.—Hiram Powers and Thorwaldsen.—Rosini.—Orioli.—Giorgini.—Superiority of Italian Intellect.—Lamentable Influence of Rome.—Enormous Quantity of Bad Pictures in the Private Dwellings of Florence.—Private Communication between the Medicean and Pitti Palaces.—Pergola.—The Creation of Haydn performed by Amateurs.—Conclusion of the Congress.—Presents given by the Grand Duke to the Members.

Florence, Sept. 1841.

IF I wished to impress an *élève* with a feeling of veneration for the right of *majorat*, and a strong idea of the universal utility of holding heir-looms sacred, I would take him to the house of the Cavaliere Cosimo Buonarroti, in the Vio Ghibellina. This house, the abode of his immortal ancestor, Michael Angelo, is full of all manner of precious relics and records of this highly-gifted and most extraordinary man; and its descent from father to son, is

the cause why every minute memorial of him has been so preserved as to render a familiar knowledge of his habits and character more attainable than in any other instance, of date equally remote. In this house Michael Angelo lived, and died; here he modelled, painted, wrote, and thought and the family museum is preserved here, with all the proud affection natural to such consanguinity, and with the patriarchal reverence of a gentleman, who feels that he has in his keeping the most precious treasures belonging to his race and name. Few men can show an escutcheon of such interest as the Cavaliere Buonarroti. It bears on its chief the *fleurs-de-lis*, as a memorial of honours achieved in Palestine and below, the field bears a Medicean ball, won from the great patron prince, by Michael Angelo himself.

A large collection of autograph manuscripts, nearly all of them still unpublished, form the most precious part of the relics thus preserved; because they are likely to bring us into the closest acquaintance with the heart and mind of their immortal author. Signore Buonarroti very kindly read to us several of the letters. The turn of thought in all was lively, and sometimes even playful; and in more than one instance, showed the power of saying strong things gracefully and thereby reminded one of works in tougher character, but issuing from the same spirit.

One little note amused me greatly, from the

contrast between its lightness, and the grandiose impressions which the very name of Michael Angelo always seems to produce. It was addressed to a lady, and written upon a scrap of blue paper not, however, of the dainty tint by which the *petites maîtresses* of our day choose to variegate their portfolios Michael Angelo's blue paper was evidently seized upon *faute de mieux*, and might likely enough have formed the envelope of a parcel of stout hose; but the great Immortal contrived to give a charm to the metamorphosis by saying, that the celestial hue of his paper must be taken by his fair correspondent as emblematical of the heavenly region to which he conceived her to belong.

Some of the letters were deeply interesting; and the tone of one to his nephew, in which he gives him much important, and even solemn advice, and then redeems what he might fear was stern in it by something almost playful at the conclusion, was charming. These precious papers, amounting to several volumes, and containing matter of interest in as many various ways as the versatile genius, and versatile life, of their author promise, are ultimately intended for publication. But the Cavaliere Cosimo Buonarroti wishes very naturally to be himself their editor, and it is to be feared that his occupations, as an active magistrate, and holding the distinguished position of President in the supreme court, may long prevent his

finding leisure for the work. . . . He seemed in speaking on the subject to be himself of this opinion; but still to feel no inclination to consign the task to another. That the Cavaliere Buonarroti would himself make the best and most satisfactory editor to this much wished-for publication, there can be no doubt; but it is a work that should not be delayed. Even the poems alone, so peculiar, so Michael-Angelic as they are, would be a benefaction to the public, for which they would be very grateful, and which it is a pity to keep from them any longer.

Many of the earliest efforts of Michael Angelo, both in painting, and sculpture, are to be seen in this family museum and I could not help regretting, notwithstanding the honourable place assigned it among the marbles at the Ufizj, that his head of a Satyr, wrought from a bit of marble given to him by Lorenzo's gardener when he was only fifteen years of age, was not preserved here; for it is well known to be the first morsel of marble upon which he ever tried his chisel.

Some of the sketches in chalk, and pencil, which we saw here are admirable; and when looked at as *thoughts* have an indescribable degree of interest. There is one of which Signore Buonarroti told us the following anecdote:—When his great ancestor hastened to Florence in the time of her utmost need, in the hope of aiding her threatened citizens by fortifying the height on which stood

the convent and church of San Miniato, the utmost promptitude and dispatch in the execution of his plans were necessary to render them available against the arrival of the expected enemy. . . . The frightened citizens laboured at the works he was carrying on with a zeal made up of patriotic feeling, personal fear, and willing obedience to his commands. . . . Among the labourers thus employed to burrow away the earth which it was necessary to remove, an aged woman particularly attracted the attention of the many-headed giant who was putting forth his strength for the protection of the city he loved; . . . this old woman worked with a vigour, that seemed to have its origin in her mind at least as much as in her limbs; and the speaking features of her coarse but resolute countenance, appeared so expressive in the eyes of the painter-sculptor-poet-architect, that he made a drawing of her. . . . This sketch had a character in it which suggested to him the idea of the mystical *capriccio* of the Three Fatal Sisters; and in looking at the sketch, it is easy to trace not only a close resemblance to one of the heads in the picture, but also that intense earnestness of mind which served to awaken the imagination of the artist into the mood that produced them all. I never saw an *ébauche* that I more heartily wished to possess. I must not attempt any enumeration of the many charming sketches that are here preserved,

nor venture upon any description of the exquisite *rilievo* medallion for which princes have sought to barter but in vain; neither that, nor any other of the precious gems contained in these rich apartments, appear at all likely to pass from the hands of their present possessor; who evidently appreciates their value too justly, both as a man of taste and a Buonarroti, to render it probable that this unique museum should ever be mutilated while he lives.

* * * *

During our last visit to Florence we took a great deal of trouble to find out when and where we could hear the best church music; but, excepting the two grand masses at the Duomo, which I have already mentioned, we were uniformly disappointed. Nor have we been more fortunate during our present stay. Mass after mass have we attended in the course of these two visits, and that in all the principal churches of Florence, without hearing anything that deserved the name. This has the more surprised me, because the greatest lady in the land is a devout Catholic, and, as well as the Duchess-mother, is a liberal patroness of everything connected with her religion. The reigning Duchess has the honour of having in some sort resuscitated a female saint, who hardly appears to have been much heard of till her Royal Highness brought her into notice. A multitude of medals

have been recently struck in honour of this Santa Filomena, which are said to be worn by all the troops. The legend of this saintess, who it seems was of Roman extraction, states that, her pre-eminent beauty caught the eye and won the heart of Dominican; but rather than consent to yield herself to his imperial, but dishonourable, pursuit, she chose the alternative of being drowned in the Tiber. For this she has been rewarded by a place in the Romish calendar, and has of late been drawn forward from the holy crowd of martyrs by the piety of the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, who has selected her as her patroness saint.... A friend of ours chanced to be present not long ago at the inauguration of this holy virgin's picture, at a church in Tuscany; and listened, of course, with great edification to an elegant discourse, in which the life and death of the fair vestal was narrated with great animation; and in that florid, and somewhat verbose, style, which the extempore preaching of the Romish Church is apt to generate; but upon changing his place a little to some point of vantage, from whence the interior of the pulpit became visible, our friend perceived within it two of the little *priestlets* whose youthful faces form so strong a contrast to their solemn dress. These two reverend children were crouching at the feet of the preacher, the one holding a written paper, the other a lamp, the

light of which was thrown strongly on the manuscript . . . Having made this leading discovery, he perceived that from time to time the animated and seemingly inspired eye of the preacher fell, and was raised again, in all the impassioned animation of extemporary composition. For my own part, I consider the holy gentleman to be perfectly excusable for this little innocent fraud, as in my opinion it is infinitely better to produce an "impromptu à loisir," than to utter crude thoughts, or unweighed phrases, from a pulpit . . . and even in the matter of narrating a Popish legend, I hold it to be better that it should be written before it is spoken; . . . nevertheless, I lament that so holy a man should be forced to have recourse to so ludicrous a cheat. It would be better to reform the matter altogether, and to let the Roman Catholic congregations profit, as our own do, by the well-weighed eloquence of their preachers.

* * * *

I have found time amidst all my innumerable engagements to pay another visit to my friend Powers, and found him greatly delighted by a visit from Thorwaldsen, and by the approbation which the veteran had bestowed upon his Eve. . . . While relating with great animation different observations which had fallen from the great man, he pointed to the mark of a finger which he had left upon the clay when indicating a trifling alteration in

the position of a falling lock of hair, which he thought would be an advantage.

"It shall remain there for ever!" said the enthusiastic young man. . . . "If ever I do it in marble I must retain that mark upon the hair."

I would I were rich enough to order a statue, large as life, to be wrought for me in marble! . . . most certainly it should be the Eve of Hiram Powers.

* * * * *

We have frequently repeated our very agreeable dining visits at the Orangery; and are tolerably constant in attending the evening meetings at the Palazzo Ricordi afterwards; these *réunions* appear more agreeable to me at every visit. I have had the pleasure of making acquaintance with several distinguished individuals, of whom Rosini, the celebrated author of that most popular of Italian novels, Luisa Strozzi, is one. He has written many highly-admired works of imagination; but is now engaged in the composition of a very elaborate work on painting, which will become, it is said, an invaluable book of reference for amateurs. It was this gentleman who wrote the little work on the Campo Santo, which so greatly delighted me at Pisa. He is animated and brilliant in conversation, and appears to be equally loved and admired by all who approach him.

With Orioli I have had the great happiness of forming an acquaintance that I am tempted to hope will not end with the Congress of Florence.

.... I should be at a loss to name any one, whom, having seen so seldom I so earnestly wish to see again.

There is another Italian, my acquaintance with whom has led me more than ever to lament the very little intercourse with Italian society which I have enjoyed. I had previously made acquaintance with M. Giorgini at the Baths of Lucca, and was delighted to see him again at Florence, though I found him too much *rependu* among the chosen spirits assembled there to see as much of him as I could have wished. . . . This highly-distinguished young man is the son of a Tuscan Minister of State, and is himself, though I should think under twenty-five years of age, Professor of Penal Law at Siena. . . . I have never in any land conversed with a man of his age who gave me an idea of such high intellectual superiority. If he be not a man of genius, and if he give not proof thereof to the world before he is ten years older "I will burn my books, and leave off prophesying." He has already met the public eye in print, and, as I am told, very successfully; but though I took very considerable pains to obtain the volume I did not succeed, and it must be, I conceive, out of print. Of his writings, therefore, I can give no account nor is it easy to give any of *him* that shall convey an idea of the deep thinking, the high-toned feeling, the exquisite taste, the delicate critical acumen which so greatly delighted me. His

conversation has a tone and, as it appeared to me, without the slightest mixture of affectation that seemed the product of a mind fully developed, but not yet fully displayed. . . . If I mistake not greatly, there is a treasury of thoughts in that young head which, were they thrown out freely, and without restraint of any kind, or from any cause, would show a richness of intellect, and a ripeness, too, that might astonish us. . . . Perhaps, I was the more interested in conversing with this young man because he seemed to me as the type of a class of men which I believe to exist in Italy, and nowhere else. In all other lands it often happens, I believe, that men write considerably more than they think taking, at least, the old-fashioned proportion which in the olden time these operations were expected to bear to each other; but in Italy they do exactly the reverse they think more than they write. There are, doubtless, strict censorships in Germany, but, nevertheless, there is no language in the world in which thought is poured forth more freely than the German. If works in this language cannot be printed, published, sold, and read in one city, or in one state, they can in another; and this fact is quite sufficient, notwithstanding all existing restraints, to give ample room and verge enough to German intellect for it to display itself, unchecked, unfettered, uncontrolled, to the whole world; and so it does, to a degree that forces all men to

become acquainted with its difficult idiom, rather than remain beyond the reach of profiting by their sublime intelligence. But far otherwise is the case in Italy. . . . Though the practical government of Tuscany has very nobly advanced itself by its liberality before all others

“ Del dolce paese dove se dicono sì ”——

its theory of literary restraint is still too actively in existence, not to produce a universal check, as galling to the dainty, though powerful, pinion of genius, as the string of a boy's kite would be to the soaring wing of an eagle; . . . nor does this affect political subjects alone: . . . it affects all subjects . . . men who, perhaps, have no more inclination to meddle practically with the government of the state, than they have with the government of the kitchen, feel the tight rein that restrains every species of thought in Italy, fully as much as if they were as persevering constitution-mongers as Jeremy Bentham. This observation, however, has no reference personally to the young Giorgini. . . . For anything I ever heard him say to the contrary, his principles may lead him to approve the restraint of which I complain. . . . But it is impossible to hold any communion with such a mind as his without feeling that the estimate which has gone abroad on the present state of Italian literature is **UTTERLY FALLACIOUS**, if extended to the present state of Italian intellect.

When I think of the lips that I have seen curl in scorn on the degraded state of the Italian people, and compare the beings they belong to with some of those I have met here, a deep-felt sense of justice inclines me to enter a protest against this judgment (as boldly recorded, as it is falsely formed) and to declare it utterly unsound. . . . A feeling of blended interest and curiosity leads very naturally to the inquiry of, How has this fallacious estimate arisen? It is in my opinion quite impossible to converse at all with any Italians of any rank and not discover that it is the *influence of Rome* which weighs upon them. It is not the merely political code of any dynasty upon earth, that could produce the intellectual repression that is so obvious here. A thousand bitter evils may, and must, attend the operations of a faulty government; ten thousand blessings may, and must follow the operations of a good one; but noble as is the study which leads to the solving of that difficult problem, how man can best be ruled and kept under wholesome restraint by man all noble as this study is, it is not, thank Heaven! the only one and were all others left free might every man dare to think, and to express what he thought, on all subjects, *save that of the state government*, we should soon cease to talk of the decline and fall of intellect in Italy; but where EVERY subject every theory, every soaring flight in metaphysics,

every excursive wandering of the imagination, from the littlenesses of daily life to the immensities of moral speculations when every thought is seized upon, held back, and crushed, ere it can meet the light of truth, and the judgment of man to test its value, what can Italian thinkers do, but sit down in moody, melancholy meditation, and be silent? Those are no enemies to the continuance of the venerable forms of the Roman religion among such as are born and nurtured in it, who lament the jealous fears by which its hierarchy are enslaved themselves, and vainly, oh! how vainly! seek to enslave others! This timidity, which encloses them as in a web, and which, when the web is woven lives along every line of it, trembling at every breath that passes by, seems to have little affinity with the firm-set confidence which said, That the gates of hell should not prevail against it! The *relaxed* religious faith, which is the *natural* and *inevitable* consequence of the system engendered by this craven fear, is far from being the *least* evil that attends it; and perhaps the most lamentable, as well as the most remarkable, feature of Italy at the present day, is the contrast between the severity of its religious watchfulness, and the laxity of its religious belief. The legislation which produces, as its surest effect, *a close proportion between instruction, and infidelity*, cannot be honestly considered by any sane human being as favourable

to the highest interests of his species. . . . And where is the looker-on, who can deny that such is the case within the states of the church?

It is, perhaps, the enforced silence of Italy on all, or nearly all, the most important themes that exercise the thoughts of man, which renders the present meeting at Florence so deeply interesting. We feel ourselves in the presence of all the hoarded, closely-closeted, intellect of the land; . . . it is like being amidst the unread volumes of a living library, the pages of which, if opened, would show goodly store of very precious thought; . . . and it is by no *blind-tooling*, I promise you, that the contents of these volumes may be guessed at . . . not upon the backs indeed, but on the brows, which tell, in characters often bright enough to be read even by those who run, that it is no ordinary crowd with which you mix yourself when waiting upon the Marchese Ridolfi in the Palazzo Ricordi.

* * * * *

The citizens of Florence have contributed their share to the entertainment of their illustrious guests, by giving them a concert in the great room of the Palazzo Vecchio. The Creation of Haydn was extremely well performed upon this occasion, and it is said entirely by amateurs. . . . If this be so, Italy may resume her old place in our musical esteem, as nationally pre-eminent in musical power . . . though the too strong absorption of London and Paris has left her operatic corps sadly out of

proportion to the unprofessional performers to whom we have listened here. The *five hundred amateurs* who went through the performance I have mentioned certainly left very little to be wished for. The parts of Gabbriello and Eva, were sung by a Signora Balbina Steffanone, who intends, it is said, to become a *cantatrice* by profession. If this be so, her success can hardly be doubted; as her charming voice made itself heard, and felt, too, without any great apparent effort, in a room a hundred and sixty feet long, sixty wide, and high, though with a flat roof, considerably *beyond* proportion. . . . The choruses were much less full, and greatly inferior in effect, to those of Exeter Hall. . . . But where shall we find any that are not so?

Though I certainly long to be at Venice, I see with regret the last days of our stay in this noble city wearing fast away; but we fail not to put every moment to profit. We have seen several private collections of pictures omitted at our last visit, and some of them with great pleasure, though I do heartily wish there were not so many acres of painted canvass in Florence! . . . It is very nearly, nay, I believe it is *quite*, impossible to enter a room where pictures are not; and the admiration, the almost reverence, which the supreme excellence of some of the *chef-d'œuvres* which we have seen here inspires, puts one in no good humour to tolerate what is bad, or only moderately good; and it is impossible to move about much from house to house

in Florence without encountering thousands of such.

I have at last, by the aid of some kind friends possessing the "open sesame" secret, got admission to the private passage leading from the Medicean gallery to the Palazzo Pitti. As an architectural performance I should suppose this contrivance had little to boast of except its difficulty, which must certainly have been very considerable; for considering the great distance, there is wonderfully little going up or down stairs, no darkness, no closeness, nor any want of space in any way. . . . We entered the passage from the Medicean gallery, by a door on the west side, near the little cabinet of the *conservadore*, and proceeded exactly by the line we had traced from without, across the bridge, through the church, and by sundry streets, till we reached the foot of a narrow staircase, on mounting which our conductor pushed open a door that fastened by a spring, and we found ourselves close upon a statue that obligingly moved out of the way to let us pass; and then we perceived that we were in a handsome room surrounded by statues like unto that which had befriended us, and which formed the last of a new *suite* of rooms, looking towards the gardens, which have been but recently completed . . . and from thence we soon reached the last of the large rooms containing the pictures. Here we paused to look about us once more, with the very dis-

agreeable consciousness that it was for the last time! What very hateful words these are!

We have also been, I suppose for the last time, to the Pergola; but here the words are less disagreeable. By the way, when an opera is bad, or badly performed, what a pretty consolation the ballet is! The want of this at Florence is severely felt sometimes.

However, I staid longer on this occasion than the last time I visited it which was on the fête of San Giovanni, when it was most splendidly illuminated from floor to roof; and the theatre itself, with the brilliant scenery and dresses, was altogether as grand a spectacle as the eye could desire to look upon; but the prima donna is a Frenchwoman, neither very young nor very pretty, and with a *criarde* voice that I seem to feel in my ears still and the illumination being almost as oppressive as her voice, I made a very early escape from the splendour.

* * * * *

The Grand Duke has ended the congress by inviting the members of it to a most magnificent banquet at the Poggio Imperiale. All speak loudly of the splendour of the entertainment in every way. I am afraid to tell you how many carriages stood ready at the proper time to convey the guests to the villa, the number named to me seemed so enormous. At the final meeting, which I did not attempt to attend from a just fear of the enormous crowd which was

expected, every member received as a parting present from the Duke a medal having on one side a representation of the Galileo tribune, with his statue *au fond*, and on the other these words: "Nei congressi degli Scienziati Italiani l'accademia del Cimento Rinasceva" surrounded by a label inscribed "Provando e Reprovando."

A very handsome guide to the city of Florence, published expressly for the occasion, with an excellent map of the city, and an *envoy* to each member by name on a fly-leaf, was presented to them at the opening of the congress and in the course of it a lithograph of a newly-discovered portrait of Dante, the finding of which has lately produced a great sensation here, was also given to each member. The lithograph bears the following inscription:—

"Dipinto da Giotto in Firenze, nel cappella del Palazzo del Podesta, et col patrocinio de S. A. I. e R. il Gran' Duca di Toscana restituto alla luce per le cure del Pittore Antonio Marini."

It seems to have been long known, by the testimony of contemporary writers, that Giotto painted a portrait of "Il gran' Toscano," in the above-named chapel when twenty-two years of age. But till last year this precious portrait has remained invisible, beneath a coat of white-wash. Three sides of the little chapel were carefully cleared of this their envious whitening, which, unlike that of the Pharisees, hid that upon which all men most fondly desired to look: . . . three sides had with

cautious reverence been made to exhibit their party-coloured mixture of fresco painting and stains, without disclosing the hoped-for portrait; but the perseverance which shrunk not from continuing the tedious operation, was at length rewarded by finding what it sought. . . . The face is that of a man, young enough to pass easily for a woman, notwithstanding a something of thoughtful severity in the features which claims resemblance with the portraits . . . all I believe following more or less closely that in the Duomo . . . with which we were before familiar.

And thus ended the Congress of Florence. . . . And I greatly doubt if any nine hundred men were ever convoked by the will of a Prince, who separated again with feelings so highly gratified, and satisfaction so entire.

We leave Florence to-morrow, having made an arrangement which we flatter ourselves will prove a very pleasant one—to travel to Venice by *vetturino*, with a party of English friends; . . . but whatever pleasures may be before us, we can neither quit Florence, nor the kind friends we leave here, without deep regret. . . . I never remembered to have enjoyed any three weeks in my life more completely than the last.

LETTER II.

Journey from Florence to Bologna. — City of Bologna. — Picture Gallery. — The University. — Abolition of certain Professorships. — Campo Santo. — Madonna della Guardia. — Leaning Towers. — Arcades of the Town. — The Neptune. — Ferrara. — Desolate Appearance of the Tower. — The Castle. — Calvin. — Duchess Renée. — Parisina. — Tasso. — Ariosto. — Crossing the Po. — Rovigo. — Its Leaning Tower. — Monselice. — Arquà. — Padua. — Giotto.

Padua, October, 1841.

It is now nearly a week ago that we started at a reasonably early hour from Florence for Bologna. The Apennine road we travelled between these two cities has more of interest than of beauty. This interest lies first from the fact of its *being among the Apennines*, and surrounded by these poetically-sounding heights on all sides; and, as long as Florence remains in sight, by every object that the eye can recognise, in or near her for-ever-venerated walls. . . . And then there is the little smoking *Fuoco del legno*, which some folks call a volcano, and which at least affords the amusement of talking about it, and looking this way, and that way, for *something* as you drive along; but as for beauty, I really think it scarcely possible to drive through a mountainous region that offers less. . . . Every hill side

with a few trees upon it pleases the eye, and on a day when the sun shines, every hollow, deep enough to refuse it admittance, pleases the imagination, by giving it the opportunity of creating what it will, because nothing can be seen to contradict it;...but there are no bold and majestic outlines traced by these mountains on the sky. The forms of the heights are almost all alike, and one very soon wearies, I think, of being pulled up and *dragged* down them. The last descent, however, that brings you upon Bologna, is very striking; for not only does it display with great and good effect the broad city of Bologna with the river Rino, (lying as usual in a bed a great deal too big for it,) but it exhibits the enormous plains of Lombardy stretching forward with a vastness that is almost sublime in its unvarying flatness. These historic plains of Lombardy, though anything but picturesque, cannot be quite looked upon with indifference; and independent of their own peculiar claims upon the attention, their being the first extensive level seen since we crossed the Alps gave them something of wonderful in our eyes.

Instead of two days, I believe that wise people would remain at least two months at Bologna; and even then would probably leave it without having seen half the precious things it has to show. But it is exceedingly difficult in travelling through such a country as Italy, even though not particularly pressed by time, to make the journey *soberly*.

There are particular points upon which the heart and the fancy have fixed themselves long before leaving our own fire-sides, the intervals between which we seem to think are to be passed over very nearly as rapidly as possible. This is a great mistake; and it was at Bologna that I first learned to be fully aware of it. The city, and it is a very large one, is crammed full of interesting objects of all kinds; and of the pictures I almost fear to speak at all, so impossible does it seem to find words that can do them justice.... I believe I felt half ashamed, and in a certain degree mortified, as I stood in the Bolognese gallery, and remembered how long I had lived without my mind's ever having conceived the idea that such canvasses *could* exist. "*My newness* was shocking to me!".... Of course I do not mean that I was absolutely ignorant of the names of these transcendent master-pieces, or that I did not know that in the gallery of Bologna I should find the Sta. Cecilia of Raphael.... that Domenichino was seen there to perfection.... that the Caracci race were there found in truth *at home*.... or that Guido's Madonna della Pietà was there:.... all this I had heard, and pretty well remembered;... but if I had never heard a single syllable on the subject, I could scarcely have been more electrified than I was in the presence of these wonders. Oh where is it gone?.... how was it ever here? or why has it vanished? This power, this magical, and well-nigh super-human, power of so

combining vile elements of earth as to make them seem to live and breathe to think and feel why if it could be ever done, can it be done no longer? It was before the Sta. Cecilia that Correggio is said to have exclaimed, when rapt in wonder and delight, "*ed io, anch' io son' pittore.*" Lives there the man *now* who could so stand and so speak? No, though conceit in him were rank as in the swelling frog of the fable, no man could say it. Nay, hundreds of years have gone by since such a word could have been recorded without exciting a feeling of scorn rather than of sympathy.

The most interesting part of the question, as to why this was and is no longer, is, that which concerns not the *habileté* but the *mind* of the artist. I do not think that any pencil ever worked with more *habileté* than that of Vandyke; but though he has painted some holy subjects with infinite grace, and not without a strong touch of pious feeling (witness the Descent from the Cross in the Antwerp Gallery), yet he never came within the reach of comparison, in point of sublime expression, with the great masters of the Italian schools. The Sta. Cecilia of the Bolognese Gallery has that in her countenance which, though few can fail to see it, and more or less appreciate its matchless purity, required for the conception of it a mind little less elevated than that of Dante, when he says that he saw Beatrice dare to look upon the sun

"Aquila sì non gli s'affisse unquanco."

Who but Raphael, and the one or two incomprehensible bright ones who make part of the same mysterious galaxy, would have thought of mixing such perfection of innocent simplicity with such fearless elevation of spirit? Or who else *could* have done it? It is surely this which makes one stand and almost worship the picture, and not the beauty of the *contours* the clever arrangement of the composition or the *artistique* skill of the colouring. Forsyth in his one volume all too short for such a theme in such hands has now and then the good fortune of hitting upon a happy phrase that expresses in half a dozen words what others may find it difficult to compress into half a hundred. The chief treasures of the Bologna Gallery were enjoying, when Forsyth visited it, what Frenchmen call "the honour of having been conveyed to Paris;" but there was still a picture left there, (Guido's Paul and Peter,) of which he says, "So excellent is art here, that it disappears, and gives up the work to sentiment" Forsyth is a name of authority, and I may venture to quote his words, which extremely well express what I would say; but I believe there be many *conoscenti* who would scorn the thought they express, as making that the principal which is only a secondary merit. But I would a thousand times rather believe that pigments fail us, than that the mind of man has degenerated. . . . I go about the world, and I find everywhere a *wonderful* accumulation,

amongst modern productions, of what is *very good* ; . . . but does any one come upon what their spirit can cordially declare to be *very great* ? . . . Read Milton, Dante, and Shakspeare, and then read Byron. . . . Look at Raphael, Domenichino, and Guido, in the gallery at Bologna, and then at Lawrence or Gerard. . . . Even Byron, with all his bright meteor-like, unshackled, thinking, has nothing really *maestoso*, nothing that can stand beside the stern sublimity of Dante, the seraph eloquence of Milton, or the living and breathing philosophy of Shakspeare. And if not Byron, who for the last two hundred years can so stand ? Is it Shelley, with his beautiful thoughts, spreading themselves into mist and vapour, so very like a feverish dream ? . . .

This is but a disagreeable train of thought, however, and not the best way of pondering with enjoyment upon the recollection of Domenichino's Martyrdom of Sta. Agnes, or his Madonna of the Rosary . . . or his Peter Martyr, . . . nor yet of Guido's Pietà, any more than of Raphael's Cecilia. . . . But there is a good deal in this country to lead the mind backward in this path of mortification. The signs of greatness that has passed away, meet us in all directions. Tuscany is a Pantheon of past intellectual giants ; a race to which perhaps no country in any age can show either resemblance or equality ; and most assuredly it is not during the *latter days* of that, or any other, land that we should be most likely to find their parallel. . . . And

it is this last part of the observation that falls painfully. We all know that men differ from each other as much as the glorious sun differs from the smallest speck of light that God permits to twinkle within our ken, and that

“ ———differentemente han dolce vita,
Per sentir più e men' l'eterno spiro.”

There is nothing to wound our vanity in this. . . . But it would be exceedingly disagreeable were we absolutely forced to believe that the human race is deteriorating, and that we shall actually wear ourselves out as intellectual beings, *à force de nous répéter*.

* * * * *

It is necessary to remember my early promise not to overwhelm you with churches, in order to prevent my doing so with those of Bologna; for they are many, and vast, and splendid enough to make one exceedingly verbose, and moreover, they are full of pictures, many of them being excellent specimens of those native artists who both individually, and collectively as a school, have perhaps given the city a more widely-extended and enduring fame than all the learning of her University and yet that this venerable seat of erudition ranks high among the highest it were sad ignorance to doubt moreover, there is no university I believe, that has shown so much gentle condescension to the ladies; more than one having been

honoured by receiving the diploma of a doctor's degree from it. . . . It is painful, however, on arriving at this first important possession of the States of the Church, to be reminded of its peculiar style of intellectual government by finding that the professorships of logic, metaphysics, morals, algebra, and geometry, have been suppressed here and, if I mistake not, throughout the whole of the Pontifical States. . . . It was from Bologna that Professor Orioli was exiled. . . . But fortunately as yet, painting still seems to be considered here as "an art —

Lawful as eating,"

and heaven forbid that any Papal edict should ever declare it otherwise for so little "dependency of thing on thing" does there appear in the above-mentioned abolitions at the University, that not even the holiness of the subjects might be sufficient to ensure the safety of the saints who are here enjoying a sort of earthly immortality. . . . At such an edict they would all, questionless, be condemned to second martyrdom, without the least compunction nor, much as we might mourn for them, can I see why they should be held more innocent of offence than algebra and geometry.

* * * * *

The Campo Santo of Bologna is the most splendid burying-ground, in point of size, in the world; and so complicated have its numerous courts and quadrangles become by repeated additions, that the

guide charged our party to keep together, that none might lose their way, and so run the risk of being locked up within this enormous enclosure. But, excepting its size, it has, I think, little to boast of. On first entering the cloister that surrounds the courts, I was greatly struck with the magnificent abundance of sculptures which met my eye; but, on drawing nearer to the objects of my admiration, I perceived that the most splendid looking amongst them were but frescoes in imitation of *rilievi*. This certainly destroys the *magnificence*; but I was told that, some day or other, the evil was to be remedied, and these fictitious sculptures replaced by real ones.

From the Campo Santo we ordered the carriage, which we had hired at the hotel for our morning excursion, to drive us to the celebrated Church of La Madonna della Guardia, which we had been particularly desired not to omit seeing, and which we knew commanded a view remarkable for its enormous extent. The coachman nodded his head in token of obedience, and set off; but ere we had continued five minutes *en route* he stopped, and we were given to understand that it was necessary that we should get out and pursue the remainder of the way on foot. Though we had reached the fourth day of our very temperate month, October, the sun was resplendent, and the atmosphere oppressively hot. We, therefore, gently remonstrated against getting out so soon, as we knew the

building we intended to visit stood upon a hill, which we felt no inclination to climb; . . . but our remonstrance availed us nothing; we were assured that it was impossible to proceed any farther in the carriage, that no carriage ever attempted it, and that, in fact, we were already *in the portico* of La Madonna della Guardia. This at once silenced us. Of course, we did not expect that our coachman would drive us through the portico of a church, even though it appeared evident that the said portico was a long one, and inclining rather abruptly upwards. But what did that signify? A portico was but a portico, and though already a good deal fatigued by sundry sight-seeings, we left the carriage, and entered the arcade that stretched itself onwards and upwards before us, expecting that when we reached the corner round which it seemed to turn, we should see the end of it. . . . Oh! vain delusion! . . . The end of it? . . . We turned that corner and perceived another long reach of arches, towering before us at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and then again turning out of sight. But we were persevering people, exemplary in the patient endurance of fatigue, and *pretty considerably* ardent in the pursuit of what we wished to see; . . . so, on we went, on, on, on; up, up, up, under these terrible arcades, which seemed, as if by wicked magic, to be long drawn out, longer and steeper, the more we toiled. And often did the party stop and take panting counsel together, as to

whether it were wisest to turn back or to proceed ; but the onward voices carried it ; and it was good at that moment to remember that when the poet says " Hope leads us on," he adds " nor leaves us when we die ;" an assurance particularly consolatory at a moment when the act of going on seemed so very likely to end in dying. . . . But it takes an immense quantity of burning sun and steep climbing to kill a party of English sight-seers ; and, strange to say, we found ourselves under the last of six hundred and forty arches which had stretched over above two miles of excessively steep ground, not only alive, but sufficiently in possession of our senses to be conscious that the atmosphere of suffocating heat, through which we had climbed up this sheltering hill, was changed upon our thus reaching the top of it into a tempest of wind before which it was exceedingly difficult to stand. Fortunately, the church-door offered only a curtain to oppose our entrance, and thankfully did we push it aside and walk in. Never was rest and shelter more welcome.

The situation of this church and convent is one very rarely equalled for isolated grandeur of elevation. The abruptness of the ascent gives a fine view of the city and surrounding country unbroken by any intervening objects in the foreground. It was like looking at a landscape at the Diorama. Unfortunately, the wind was too violent to permit us to enjoy the spectacle we had

building we intended to visit stood upon a hill, which we felt no inclination to climb; . . . but our remonstrance availed us nothing; we were assured that it was impossible to proceed any farther in the carriage, that no carriage ever attempted it, and that, in fact, we were already *in the portico* of La Madonna della Guardia. This at once silenced us. Of course, we did not expect that our coachman would drive us through the portico of a church, even though it appeared evident that the said portico was a long one, and inclining rather abruptly upwards. But what did that signify? A portico was but a portico, and though already a good deal fatigued by sundry sight-seeings, we left the carriage, and entered the arcade that stretched itself onwards and upwards before us, expecting that when we reached the corner round which it seemed to turn, we should see the end of it. . . . Oh! vain delusion! . . . The end of it? . . . We turned that corner and perceived another long reach of arches, towering before us at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and then again turning out of sight. But we were persevering people, exemplary in the patient endurance of fatigue, and *pretty considerably* ardent in the pursuit of what we wished to see; . . . so, on we went, on, on, on; up, up, up, under these terrible arcades, which seemed, as if by wicked magic, to be long drawn out, longer and steeper, the more we toiled. And often did the party stop and take panting counsel together, as to

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laboured so severely to behold ; but we just saw it sufficiently to confess that it was worth some trouble to get at, though I doubt if we should any of us advise a very dear lady-friend to attempt the adventure. The feat, however, might be performed easily enough by the help of ponies or donkeys, though at intervals the abruptness of the ascent has reduced the architect to the necessity of carrying on his portico, as they queerly call it, by means of steps. . . . But on the outside of the arcade there is, during the whole distance, a sort of road that I should suppose it would be perfectly easy to ride over.

This singular erection is the pious labour of the citizens of Bologna, every class contributing a sum of money towards it ; as we learnt by inscriptions placed at intervals between the arches, stating, that such and such a number of them had been erected at the cost of the tailors, or the tinkers, or the shoe-makers, or the servants, of the town not a trade or profession of any kind being omitted. So steep was this hill that even the descent of it was fatiguing ; and glad enough we were to find the carriage waiting where we had left it ; a consolation which we had hardly dared to hope for ; but it is a man-œuvre which the hotel equipages perform so often that they are well broken in to the long halt, and neither coachman nor horses betrayed any symptoms of restiveness.

The two leaning towers here, appear to me very little less wonderful than that of Pisa.... and here, too, the same unaccountable doubt has arisen as to whether they have sunk, or were built in this deformed style by the grotesque whim of the architect. One often hears doubts expressed on matters that appear sufficiently intelligible to make the act of doubting much more puzzling than the cause of it; but in no case do I remember so egregious an instance of it as this. Both these towers are very lofty, and too slender to be beautiful, for everything like proportion seems lost sight of in the effort to make them as high as possible. One of these bending towers called "La Carisenda," is alluded to by Dante, and proves clearly enough that it was as obviously out of the perpendicular above five hundred years ago, as it is now.... He says, speaking of the giant who bore Virgil and himself away, that in the act of taking them—

"Qual pare a reguarder la Carisenda,"

for so he writes it,

"Sotto 'l chinato, quand' un nuvol vada;"

and because he has thus named it, the old tower is popularly called "Dante's tower" to this day. Shakspeare is a popular name with us, down deeper, perhaps, than any other literary name, into the sub-medio ranks of the people; but that

of Dante is familiar as a "household word," even to the very lowest, here.

I began talking to you of Bologna, with an expression of regret at not having seen it more thoroughly, and I must end in the same strain! I feel more conscious of the treasures it contains than acquainted with them. The hours that I have spent in the picture gallery, indeed, have sufficed to make the impression indelible.... but the churches I do not know *by heart* as I do those of Florence....and all I remember of the general effect of the city is, the gloomy air given by its low-browed arcades, which, though a very rational mode of building in a country where shade is so much required, can only contribute to beauty when constructed on as grand a scale as some of those at Turin.

The majestic Neptune, too, of its great and immortal John, made a forcible impression on my memory, by its stupendous dignity of size and aspect;....but yet, though I have not passed through Bologna absolutely in vain, I say again, that I know not the city, and that I should well like to re-visit it, in a manner more respectfully deliberate, and more befitting its greatness.

* * * * *

People talk of a city of the dead, and the phrase is very poetically strong, and horrificably picturesque;...but it will not do for Ferrara:...and yet, beyond all comparison, Ferrara has the

saddest aspect to my fancy that ever city presented. It is not dead, for there are human beings still living and moving about in its melancholy desolate-looking streets; . . . but it looks like the last, ragged, rotten, remnant of a worn-out world, struggling, as it were, for vital breath, and very nearly breathing its last sigh.

Our party, while walking through its dismal streets, asked each other for what amount of revenue they would consent to inhabit the city for life. One rash one answered . . . "I would for a hundred thousand a year!" . . . "What? . . . If it were for life?" asked another. A sort of shudder seemed to pass through the frame of the inconsiderate mortal, who for an instant had fancied that any amount of gold could suffice to gild the bars of such a prison, so as to render its aspect endurable, and he exclaimed in an accent of almost terrified repentance . . . "Oh! no, no, no! . . . I would not live here for any possible amount of wealth that could be offered to me!"

But, nevertheless, this too eloquent specimen of the effects of misrule has still much that is most deeply interesting within its tell-tale walls. . . . But the interest is rather that of the grave, than of the living world above it. Neither the rich old churches, nor the pictures, nor the palace, nor anything else within the walls of Ferrara, would now suffice to detain the traveller for a single hour, had Ariosto never laughed, nor Tasso groan-

ed within its walls . . . had Parisina never lived, nor Hugo died here. But there are more among us, I believe, who would linger in their way to look on a tragedy, than to see Punch . . . And, notwithstanding the dreariness of this very Papal town, it would be difficult, I suspect, to find any one who would not choose to remain in it long enough to "steep their souls in sadness," till almost unable to breathe without a sigh.

The dismal moat-surrounded palace of the Cardinal Legate, formerly the eventful dwelling of the race of Este, was the first object of our researches ; and it is strange in going through its numerous apartments to feel the contrast between the, perhaps, unequalled interest which memory gives them, and the absence of every other species of attraction. There are arms of cardinals, and hats of cardinals, and a cardinal's state-chair, and a few trumpery decorations, here and there, that vainly attempt to hide the naked desolation of the place ; and this is all that is left to look upon in the palace of the Este race ! But shut your eyes for a moment, and the consciousness of the spot on which you stand surrounds you in a moment with visions of such a host of departed great ones, that it would be difficult to say that the castle of Ferrara was uninhabited. The room in which Calvin preached to the high-minded Frenchwoman, the Duchess Renée, and the little set of reformed believers which she ventured to get about her,

if not the most romantic, is not the least interesting, point at which memory may set to work there. How *very* near was Italy at that time to becoming Protestant! . . . It was not the Duchess Renée only, but many of the most distinguished scholars of the country: and not a few even among the clergy who had adopted the reformed doctrines. *Nothing*, . . . as any inquiry into the subject will very clearly prove, . . . *nothing*, but the powerfully-organized system of the *Inquisition* stopped it. No wonder that the most zealous Romish Princes of the present day should so eagerly desire to restore its irresistible power. With it they believe they may do everything; . . . but without it, they greatly fear that they shall ere very long, be able to do *nothing*.

The sober thoughts suggested by the recollections of the good Duchess Renée being dismissed, we turned to more poetical themes. . . . The *cicerone* who attended us through the rooms, appeared as well acquainted with all the little circumstances connected with Parisina's unfortunate affair, as if he had been her page of honour at the time. I should like to know how much of what is now poured into the ears of travellers upon that subject, was bestowed upon them before the poem of Lord Byron was published. That the principal facts took place is historically certain, and that the story was popularly told may be guessed by Lord Byron's having taken it as a theme, after visiting the scene where

it occurred ; but I cannot help suspecting that some of the very minute particulars have been got up since. In one room we were desired to look at what is now only the fragment of a mirror, inserted in the wall over the chimney-piece of the handsomest saloon in the castle. We were then entreated to observe that this mirror reflected and must have done so, of course, more completely when entire the windows of another saloon situated on the opposite side of the quadrangle into which it looked. It was in this mirror that the Marquis of Este, the cruel Azo of Lord Byron's poem, saw his unfortunate son bestow a caress upon his step-mother, whose heart he had been permitted to win before she had been seen by his father The rest of the story is much too well known to repeat. "C'est connue," as the young *savans* of young France say of all things in heaven and earth, "c'est connue."

When we reached the room whose unlucky windows did the mischief, our guide again stopped us, and made us observe the position of the mirror in the room we had previously visited, and the facility with which the accident might have happened He also told us that this little room was known by the name of "La camera del disgrazia" a name given not only because the offence for which the wretched pair suffered, was committed there, but because it was in that room that the ~~cruel~~ father stationed himself when he doomed his son to death,

and from the windows of which he is said to have witnessed, nay, accurately watched, his being massacred in the court beneath . . . where, between two draw-wells, the precise spot is pointed out, where, according to tradition, the poor youth underwent the savage sentence pronounced against him. Some accounts say, that Parisina was executed on the same scaffold, after having been compelled to witness the last agonies of her lover; but others state that she did not suffer death, being reserved for a fate considerably worse in a convent of great severity, where she was consigned to the castigating care of a rigorous and particularly loyal abbess. We will hope that the first version is the true one.

But there are other tragic records connected with this hateful castle, which are listened to with far deeper sympathy . . . first because there is no uncertainty of their truth to weaken the interest; and, secondly, because the subject of them, is incomparably more deserving of being an object of it. It was in these rooms, now so gloomy and deserted, that the eloquent Tasso breathed forth verses which made them then a region of delight . . . and it was here that the tender admiration created in the breast of a princess, by his delicious strains, was repaid with his whole heart . . . followed by the bitter misery of long imprisonment, and by the temporary quenching of that brilliant light which had given to the court of the ungrateful tyrant, the greatest splendour it could ever boast. This is a

tragedy of a very different kind from that of the Lady Parisina, and her guilty, however pitiable, lover; and the scene of it cannot be visited without deep emotion.

From the castle we went to the hospital of St. Anne, chiefly, as may be supposed, for the purpose of seeing the cell where Tasso is said to have been confined. The history of this confinement appears to have given occasion to a vast deal of cavilling among biographers and historians, though I find very little in the statements of those the most deserving of attention which is in any important degree at variance. All agree in the great leading fact that Tasso was most unjustifiably put into confinement by his self-called patron and friend, Alfonso, Duke of Este. Had Tasso been notoriously a lunatic when he was put into confinement by the Duke, it is quite impossible that so many voices should have been raised against the tyranny of the act. But a proof infinitely stronger still that he was not a lunatic during the period of his confinement at St. Anne's, may be found in the manner in which he employed himself while there.... That a being of so sensitive and impassioned a temperament as Tasso, might have been goaded into temporary delirium by the horrible persecution of the tyrant is likely enough; and such may have been the dreadful feelings of which he himself complains in one of his letters to his sister.... But even this letter, in which he so feelingly speaks of the ter-

rible consciousness that his mind was failing him, is, nevertheless, anything but the letter of a madman. From the size, the position, and the nature of the cell at St. Anne's hospital, where he was placed upon being first sent there, (and this is the cell now shown as his prison,) it is more than probable . . . it may be considered as *certain*, that Alfonso sent him thither as a madman, with orders that he should be confined as such. But it is evident that he dared not venture to continue this extremity of barbarity long: for at the end of eight months Tasso himself states that he has been removed to an apartment in which he could walk about and *philosophize* . . . and in this larger apartment it was that he wrote the "*verse e prose*" mentioned in the inscription above the door of his cell . . . for in the cell itself it would have been utterly impossible to write, from the darkness; without dwelling upon the moral impossibility of producing such compositions in such a den. . . But it is, in fact, absurd to quote this inscription, because it bears one falsehood, at the least, so notorious as completely to vitiate its authority throughout. This fibbing inscription says, that *Torquato Tasso demorò ritenuto in questa stanza, anni 7—mesi 2*. Whereas it is perfectly well-known that he was removed from this room to a larger one at the end of somewhat more than eight months. The reason for this falsification is obvious: the place in which Tasso is supposed to have written and corrected so considerable a

portion of his precious verses is become a valuable estate to the hospital . . . nobody passes through Ferrara who is not willing to pay something for looking into a room so immortalized, and for the permission of taking thence a few crumbs of brick-dust which you are liberally permitted to scratch from a hole in the wall, in which this reverentially-sentimental scratching has been going on for years . . . but this payment would speedily lessen, or perhaps cease altogether, if it were to be acknowledged that the alterations made some years ago for the enlargement of the wards of the hospital, rendered it necessary to destroy the larger room, which was, in fact, the scene of the poet's lengthened confinement. . . . This, however, is the case; and it is because this is not generally known that many have declared the history of his having written and corrected his works under confinement to be altogether a fable. I wish it were possible to believe that it were so. It would be greatly less painful to know that the author of the *Gerusalemme* had become really mad, and unconscious of his own bitter misfortunes, than that he should have remained for seven years and two months a prisoner in the most commodious chamber that the hospital of St. Anne could ever have afforded him.

I suppose that the difficulty of ascertaining the simple truth concerning the events which befall individuals of great celebrity, is pretty nearly in proportion to their fame. It is not at all worth

while for any one, however well disposed for gossip he may feel, to enter into discussion upon dry facts that have no scandal in them concerning men personally unknown; and for such as *are* personally known the temptation is less still; because none of the piquancy of doubt concerning them can exist. But when some great one is talked of incessantly, while the truth concerning him is not known at all, or at any rate not with certainty, conjecture has no bounds. And thus in speaking of Tasso, even in the country wherein he lived and died, you encounter contradictory evidence at every step. Some vehemently assure you that he was born at Naples....others as vehemently declare that it was at Torrento that he first saw the light. One *savant* insists that he lived for years in a state of insanity....while others refute the assertion, and declare that from the first hour to the last of his detention, it was the wanton work of a base and most vindictive enemy. One now assures you that his high-placed love was only too prosperous; while another is equally positive that cold ingratitude was the only meed his devoted affection ever received. In the midst of all this, it is about equally impossible not to form an opinion of your own, or to support it with anything like consistent testimony when it is formed.

* * * * *

The visits paid to the memorials of the gay, light-hearted romancer, Ariosto, are quite of a different

kind. The library, where not only his chair, his ink-stand, and his precious manuscripts may be found, but the much stranger treasure of his sepulchre also, seems, as you stand there, listening to all the *cicerone* has to tell about him; as if you were actually in his presence, paying him a visit, and offering your very heartfelt congratulations upon the high state of preservation in which you have found him. . . . But I was a little puzzled, while thus ransacking to the utmost extent of my power all these dear relics at Ferrara, to understand why it was that everything connected with Tasso interested me so much more deeply than the memorials of Ariosto . . . for most assuredly I have owed greater and more frequent pleasure to the romantic than to the epic bard . . . but somehow or other Tasso is the hero of Ferrara. I will not say, however, though Ariosto in his government of Garfagnona *has* been compared to Sancho in the like dignified position in his Barattaria island, that Torquato appeared the knight, and Ludovico only the squire . . . but nevertheless I could not contrive to place them side by side in my fancy as equals.

We were told at the castle, that the same ill-omened little room in which Parisina was seen by the Marquis Nicholas of Este, her enraged husband, and in which he placed himself to see the execution, as well as to command it, was the identical chamber from which the brutal Alfonso II. issued the command to seize the poet Tasso, and convey

him to the hospital of St. Anne a command which has doomed the giver of it to as great an immortality of earthly condemnation, as any act perhaps that man has ever committed. It was very evident that the man who attended us through the castle thought that, as countryfolks of Lord Byron, the Parisina story must be the one to interest us the most; and it was upon this he dwelt; the mention of Duke Alfonso's act being seemingly but accidental. But from the moment he uttered the words alluding to this horrid command, the visions which flitted round me in that mournful old palace became comparatively modern. It was no longer "Parisina's fatal charms" that I seemed to see, but the stately form of the all too lovely Leonora, and Lucretia too, the kind and faithful friend, and the princely Cesare and the fair Virginia de' Medici, and the "Serenissima Margherita" even the "vez-zosetto Grechino," the cherished *canino* of the party, all seemed moving before me in those gloomy rooms and I would not have been left alone in them at nightfall for more than I will say.

How much the sense of ghastly gloominess in the castle, might have been increased by the previous impression made by the town, I cannot say; but certainly I never came forth from any portal with such a feeling of having escaped from the mementos of terror and of crime, as when I passed over the bridge that traverses the coal-black waters of the moat around the castle of

Ferrara. Yet the miserable town itself had gained nothing in pleasantness of aspect, by our long visit in its dark castle. I certainly never did behold so very dirty, and so very dismal a place. In this there was no mixture of fancy. The iron stauncheons with which all the lower windows in Italy are protected, are in Ferrara hung with cobwebs as thick as canvass . . . every group you meet in the streets, seems to come before you as the very emblem of squalid wretchedness. In short the whole place is dusty, dirty, worn out, and decrepid-looking to the very last degree; and I can only liken it to a wretched culprit, wearing out in misery and want, the last days of his life as a punishment for the crimes committed in his youth.

* * * * *

The business of quitting the Roman States, when proceeding from Florence to Venice, is performed by crossing the Po in a ferry-boat very nearly as clumsily arranged as that which conveyed us across the Magra. . . . And on this occasion, in addition to all the doubts and fears inspired by clumsy mechanism, and insufficient tackle, we had a tolerably large cap full of equinoctial wind. The broad river was rough, and the narrow boat was frail . . . but choice there was none, so our carriage was jolted and jumbled on board, and we followed after, with all the courage which is sure to arise from knowing that it is impossible to run

away. Our fellow-passengers were two; an old woman who sat herself quietly down on her basket, as soon as she had stowed it in a sheltered corner, and looked as if she cared not a fig either for wind or water; having, in no small degree, the physiognomy of one who occasionally traversed both, by means of vehicles still less artistically formed than our miserable boat.... either a tub or a broomstick might have suited her well. But our other passenger was a meek-looking priest, who did not appear at all to enjoy the idea of his projected voyage; but, after the hesitation of a moment, he, too, stepped on board, saying in a gentle voice to the boatman as he did so, "*Ci e molta pericolo?*".... which being answered by a quiet "No," he too stowed himself away where he was the least likely to be blown overboard. Notwithstanding the pious "*no*" uttered for the encouragement of our holy companion, I much suspect that the passage was not made without risk; the carriage was heavy, the crazy boat very low in the water, and the rope by which we swung across, by no means in very good repair;... the boatmen knit their dark brows, and looked anxious;... the wind howled, and the boat creaked.... Nevertheless we reached the opposite shore in safety, though, for the first time for many months, shivering with cold.

The little town of Rovigo, where we halted for an hour or two to bait our horses, has its

leaning tower, as well as Pisa and Bologna. We hear much of the extraordinary strength of the cement used by the old Romans, and all these lofty towers, which stoop so strangely without falling, must, I think, owe their puzzling stability to the tenacity of the cement employed in their construction, and which is probably composed of the same elements as those used by the former inhabitants of the land.

Tempted by the bright display of flowers seen through an open gate, we entered a garden at Rovigo, which was in part laid out upon the old walls of the town, and which had the un-English sort of prettiness arising from orange-trees, and oleanders, set in huge pots; such as might have served for the nefarious concealment of the forty thieves. The gardener civilly came forward to assist our researches, and told us, as he gathered for us a nosegay of his bright autumn flowers, that the villa belonged to a noble lady who passed her winters in Venice, but retreated hither during the heats of summer. This rather surprised me as there was nothing in the appearance either of the house or garden which in any degree approached the idea I had formed of the villas of the Venetian nobility.... Somehow, or other, my head has for years been filled with very sumptuous notions of these Venetian villas. And I have vague visions of Palladian architecture, and the lovely Brenta, or the fair Adige, reflecting its

graceful forms on their fair bosoms.... Perhaps all this is in store for me nearer Venice. But in the noble lady's dwelling at Rovigo, the flower-pots above-mentioned, and the fragment of the old town wall, constitute the only beauty and the only grandeur of the residence.

After leaving Rovigo, we passed the Adige, which is greatly less lovely in aspect than in name, on another *pont-volant*.... but the river being narrower, and the wind less troublesome, we had no further alarms.

The heavy sandiness of the road, and the uniform flatness of the country, renders this journey from Bologna to Padua tedious and uninteresting. Monselice is the only considerable elevation throughout the whole distance, and this singularity makes the little *monticello* appear quite dignified and beautiful. It was from this place, after a vast deal of discussion on the subject, that we at length determined to make the little *détour* of about six miles, which was to take us to Arquâ. It has been perfectly a matter of astonishment to observe the difficulty of obtaining information at every inn where we made inquiry as we came along, as to the best place at which to leave the road for the purpose of making a pilgrimage to the house and the grave of Petrarch; and at last we were more guided by maps than by any oral information.

Monselice is also really worth pausing at for its

own sake, for it has much that is picturesque about it... This isolated hill, though not very lofty, is bold and abrupt; and the long-extended line of ruins, made up of castles, towers, and fortifications, which reaches from its very apex to the little town at its feet, mingled as they are with stunted, but rich-looking foliage, have an excellent effect. Besides, by mounting this hill you have the satisfaction of discovering that the plain you have been travelling over is not to last for ever; for besides the far-famed little Euganean hills, which are within a few miles, a fine, though shadowy, outline of the Rhœtian Alps towards the north, greatly refreshes the eye, and comforts the imagination.... The bare cones of these Euganean hills, however, look more like the Pyramids of Egypt than the olive-coloured heights which I expected to find them.... and to say truth, after leaving Monselice behind us, the road towards Arquâ is anything rather than beautiful.... Having left our heavy carriage at the inn, we packed ourselves into a light but very frail-looking old equipage which, by the help of a pair of quiet horses, took us safely and pleasantly enough, though the road was sometimes rough, to the foot of the steep hill where stands the empty shrine we had come to visit. The badness of the road, however, I did not greatly regard:.... a little jolting, *de plus* or *de moins*, signifies not greatly on such an enterprise as we are now performing;.... but it vexed me to see by

what an exceedingly unpicturesque route the gracious Petrarch had to reach the retreat which, "*placed among the Euganean hills,*" has sounded so sweetly in my ears from my youth up, even until now.

"Petrarch! . . . When we that name repeat"
says Milnes,

"Its music seems to fall
Like distant bells, soft-voiced, and sweet,
Yet sorrowful withal."

And this is as strictly true as it is simply spoken. . . . But the sweetness and the sorrow both led me to wish for something near his abode fairer to the eye than anything I found among these Euganean hills. . . . At a distance, indeed, their wavy outline was a relief after the long extent of plain we had passed over since quitting the Apennines; but the nearer view of their volcanic-looking points cannot atone for the almost swampy aspect of the ground at their feet . . . nor for the straight line of canal which borders the road. Did Petrarch indeed ride or walk beside that dull canal every time he sought his home or left it?

The hill, upon the side of which the miserable-looking village of Arquâ is built, rises from the plain as suddenly as that of Monselice, and at one or two points commands views interesting from the whimsical formation of the neighbouring heights, and from sundry castles or convents on their summits . . . but how any honest man in his senses can

ever have thought that "Arquâ is delightfully situated," I am at a loss to conceive. The house of the poet is at the very top of this hill, and could never have been a dwelling of any great pretension, or of any kind of rural luxury; . . . for there is not a green field or shade-ful tree near it; neither could the garden ever have been more than a very humble *potager*, with a few flowers, perhaps, in one corner.

Nor is the house indicative of much more splendour than the garden. . . . The largest room is a sort of entrance-hall, on the walls of which have been painted, in honour of him who once dwelt there, some indescribably queer compositions, taken from some of the auto-biographic passages in his works. On one side of this is a good-sized room that looks as if it might have been the kitchen . . . and on the other what, evidently, was the portion of the house chiefly inhabited by the poet. This division of the mansion consists of three rooms; the first, opening from the above-mentioned hall, is what might have served as a moderate-sized withdrawing-room, the hall being, of course, the refectory. Within this withdrawing-room is another, much smaller, in which the poet is said to have slept, and some few fragments of furniture are shown there . . . and within that, one much smaller still, in fact not larger than a moderate-sized closet, where tradition says that Francesco Petrarch read . . . wrote . . . and died . . . being found in the

one chair which it contained with his head resting on his desk, and life totally extinct.

In the apartment that I call the withdrawing-room is the greatly shrunk skin of a white cat, which is positively stated to be the identical skin that Petrarch caused to be stuffed some five hundred years ago, in honour of the departed favourite who had once purred within it: . . . nor do I see any reason to doubt the statement. The skin is preserved in a small case with a closely-fitted glass front; and unless it be presumed that the skin itself, and all that was put to preserve it, have actually vanished into the air . . . which by the way, has never reached it . . . there seems no cause to doubt the identity of this shrivelled skin; for it is impossible, I think, that it could dwindle farther.

Beneath the box which contains it are these lines:

"*Etruscus gemino vates exarsit amore,
Maximus ignis ego; Laura secundus erat—
Quid rides? Divinæ illam si gratia formæ,
Me dignam eximio fecit amante fides;
Si numeros geneam sacris dedit illa libellis,
Causa ego ne sævis muribus esca forent.*"

The one small window of Petrarch's closet has more of a view than any other in the house, looking first, indeed, down upon the ugly square garden, but beyond it upon various bare points of those Euganean hills, of which all the world of biographers and critics declare him to have been so

very fond. But it seems strange to me that any man who could submit to sit between four such very narrow walls, for the sake of the view he was enabled to peep at from them, should not have taken up his rest where the view was more really beautiful. My theory on the subject is, that he chose not this spot with any reference whatever to its beauty; but solely because it was likely to ensure him complete retirement whenever he wished for it. And this was a privilege likely enough to be prized by a poet and a writer in all ways so voluminous, whose life was one continued series of public business and dissipation, and who, in fact, chose it not for his home till age had already made tranquillity a blessing. . . . Petrarch was already sixty years old when he first took up his abode at Arquâ.

Among the great men whose stand has been too firmly taken in the Temple of Fame for any one to dream of questioning his right of being there, I think Petrarch is, perhaps, the least popularly known and *really* appreciated beyond his own country. Difficult as Dante is acknowledged to be, even by his countrymen, I do truly believe, that where his enormous power has once made itself felt upon the mind, there is no degree of labour that has been considered too great as the price of understanding him fully. To any one who can read the language at all Tasso must be easy Ariosto but little less so; and the same may be

said of many other Italian writers. But not of Petrarch; it requires *study* for a foreigner to understand him at all, and this study (popularly speaking) has been but rarely given. Where it *has*, Petrarch is not considered as a love-stricken sonneteer; but as a poet equally sublime as an observer of nature and as a deep student of the feelings of the human heart unequalled, perhaps, in the felicitous delicacy of expression in which his images and meditations are clothed, and more capable of giving birth to the subtle thoughts and brilliant phantasies which it is natural to suppose are conceived in the minds of many but which die before they live, because too finely delicate to take such ordinary forms as ordinary men could give them: such thoughts as these Petrarch could better clothe in words than any other with whose writings I am conversant.

How often have I heard, how often have we all heard very clever people say, that they "*could not* read Petrarch:" not meaning, however, to allude to the difficulties of his style, but to what they are pleased to call the insipid sameness of his compositions. . . . I remember, many years ago, being found by really a *very* clever man reading Petrarch, and in those days I read him *studiously*. . . . He expressed something like wonder that I could so employ myself. . . . I quite forget what I said in return, or how the conversation proceeded on either side; but I remember the rare ingenuousness with

which he said at the conclusion of it, "I believe you have the advantage of knowing better what we are talking about than I do . . . I really believe you have read Petrarch, which I confess I never did." . . . How many of those who pass over the mention of his name with a shrug, and with as large an ablution from Lethe as it is in their power to throw upon it, might say the same with equal truth, if they had but equal sincerity !

* * * * *

I was quite determined not to leave the spot where Petrarch had lived and wrote, had died and was buried, without some relic. . . . But it was not so easy to find it as to obtain my bit of brick from the prison of Tasso. . . . There we found a friendly little hammer ready at hand to help the mutilating but sentimental process ; but at Arquâ every floor had been scrupulously cleaned of every possible fragment which had fallen from the walls. In the little closet I industriously sought to find something that I could bring away with me ; but this activity of the collective organ was wholly in vain. Unless I had desperately scratched the whitewash from the walls with my bare nails I could have got nothing. It was to no purpose, either, that I looked out of the little square window into the garden below in the hope of finding some leaf that I might pluck in token that the pilgrimage had been made . . . for though some straggling pomegranate-trees, laden with their splendid fruit, were

at no great distance, they were beyond the reach of my hand. In the court before the door of entrance, however, I had better fortune, for I had the good luck to spy the neglected boughs of a ~~sunken~~ passion-flower trailing its still luxuriant honours in the dust. It grew in the most remote corner of the court, and I had to make my way over much rubbish, but I succeeded in plucking half a dozen leaves, which will hold an honoured place in my museum. . . . Query, Is the passion-flower a plant that can reproduce itself for a period of between four and five hundred years? . . . I hope so . . . for then, I may have the satisfaction of believing that the passion-flower of Petrarch (horticulturally speaking) is my passion-flower too.

We found, as is usual in all spots sacred to sentimental recollections, a huge album filled with miniature morsels of the lights and shades of human intellect. We gave not much time to the examination of it . . . which would indeed have been but an injudicious expenditure of the precious material . . . for the volume, such as it is, with all the littleness and positive nothingness of most of its pages, has been printed. One trifling proof this, amongst a thousand great ones, of the passionate reverence in which the Italians hold everything in any way connected with their great men. This feeling seems almost equally strong in the breast of the prince and the peasant, of the scholar in his closet and the enthusiastic reciter of verses.

in a booth ; and it is a fact which, if fully received, as it may very safely be, will convey a more distinctive and a more true idea of the genuine Italian character, than any other trait, perhaps, that could be mentioned.

Of all the nations with which I have yet made acquaintance the Italians and the French appear to me to be the most strikingly contrasted in all things ; . . . both, for instance, have strong feelings of attachment to their country ; but in France this shows itself much in the manner that an Etonian or a Westminster might display his love for "our fellows, who are the finest fellows in the world" . . . while in Italy it rather takes the solemn tone of a devoted son, who clings with holy pride to the noble qualities of his father, and feeds what vanity he has from that source, and not from the oil of gladness extracted by eternal approbation of himself.

Lord Byron's name is among those we found in the album at Arquâ.

Delightedly as I follow that true poet, Milnes, in most of his thoughts and fancies, I heeded not his saying in the lines penned here . . . and penned evidently with deep poetic feeling—

"They say, thy tomb lies there below,
What want I with the marble show?
I am content — I will not go."

I could not be content, while anything connect-

ed with Petrarch remained at Arquâ unseen; and having closed the album, and taken one last farewell glance around, I very literally descended to the tomb, though not exactly into it.

The churchyard in which the red marble monument that contains the ashes of Petrarch is placed, is about half way up the steep ascent on the summit of which his house stands. The most remarkable thing about it is, that this precious dust is contained in the sarcophagus which constitutes the principal part of the erection, and not, according to the usual practice, buried in earth beneath it. This massive sarcophagus has a rent down one of its sides, which we were told was made by some very sacrilegious adorers from Florence, and by means of which they extracted one of the poet's arms at the witching hour of night, and left the stone in a condition which, when found by the villagers in the morning, suggested the idea that the poet had burst his tomb, and that his body, prematurely restored to the same immortality as his spirit, had followed it to heaven.... On examination, however, it was discovered that one limb only had disappeared, and the monument was repaired as we now see it. This theft was committed in 1630, and the tomb, though now more easily opened, has not been violated since.

The view of Monselice, as we returned to it, was so beautiful that I almost retracted my opinion on the want of local beauty near this abode,

of the poet; but this beauty is only in one direction. . . . And not all the *prestige* thrown around the famous Euganean hills, either by Petrarch's supposed admiration of them, or the loving testimony in their favour borne by so many poetic pilgrims who have declared that they admire them also, could persuade me to think their low, yet arid, pinnacles, in any way lovely to the eye, however strong the emotion produced by looking at them may be, while remembering that Petrarch had looked at them too and then closed his eyes amongst them.

Padua, though by no means equal to Bologna, should, like it, have more time devoted to its examination than is likely to be given by travellers in pursuit of such an object as Venice. Our party halted there for a part only of two days; and though very far from being inactive during the time, we by no means saw all worth seeing which this venerable city has to show. If Tasso be the hero of Ferrara, Giotto is the hero of Padua, even more than St. Anthony himself; and conscious of all that art owed to this great man, conscious, moreover, that he was the companion and friend of Dante, it was impossible, notwithstanding the Venetian fever which was so strong upon us, not to set about looking for the works of his brush still existing here, with the most lively interest.

The chapel of the Annunziata nell' Arena is certainly the most precious relic in Padua

though doubtless it would be accounted heresy at St. Peter's to say so. But without affecting to possess an atom of that recondite connoisseurship which enables the learned eye to detect beauty in outlines nearly effaced, and grace of composition in groups which it requires more imagination than eyesight to trace, it is impossible not to feel reverence, deep and sincere, for the hand which first led the way to results so conducive to the embellishment of life. . . . To know that Titian studied the works of Giotto is quite enough to excite a feeling of reverence for them, that may send the unlearned, with great eagerness and without any mixture of affectation, to the little church of the Annunziata.

Having made this apology for taking the liberty of being delighted with it, I will venture to confess that I was so. There is something almost mysterious to me, or, at any rate, quite beyond my power of explaining, in the manner in which these fading compositions grow upon the fancy as you study them. The effort to follow, or rather to catch, the same impressions which we know that in their freshness they were capable of inspiring, arouses the faculties to a keenness of scrutiny which leads to greater pleasure than it seems possible, during the first few moments of examination, that they should inspire. When once the eye has succeeded in disentangling, as it were, the pale and melting tints, so as to leave no confusion as to the design,

no one can fail to feel the chaste and beautiful simplicity of the figures, and the quiet eloquence with which they tell their tale. If every painter who feels within him some powerful conception which it is his object to throw upon his canvass, would have the courage to trace his thought with as little grimace as Giotto, a stronger degree of emotion would be awakened in the mind of the spectator than the historical pictures of the present day produce. . . . There is no difficulty whatever in fancying Dante and Giotto working together at the majestic composition of the Last Judgment; and one feels in very goodly company as one stands before it, all faint and fading as it is, listening, as it were, to their distant voices in consultation. . . . The larger half of a thousand years has passed over that stained wall, since the thoughts of these mighty men were traced upon it; . . . yet still these thoughts to hold communion with our own. This dwindle to nothing when set beside the immortality of Heaven; but on earth it seems magnificently great. No wonder so accomplished and intellectual an artist as Sir Augustus Calcott found in them a theme for so much elaborate study and learned speculation. . . . I would have given much to have had his splendid pages with me at Padua.

We felt that we were drawing near to Venice when told that a spot beside the Annunziata, now occupied apparently by no very illustrious inhabitants, was formerly the site of a palace belonging

to the Foscari . . . there is no name more thoroughly Venetian than this; and the very sound of it made me long to be off. . . . It is quite true, most assuredly, that there are a multitude of admirable things to be seen here besides Giotto's chapel; but in order to enjoy them with a tranquil spirit, they should be seen on the return from Venice, and not while on the road to it.

Giotto himself is to be met with, in better or worse condition, in a great variety of buildings, not one of which should be *overlooked*, or looked over slightly; . . . and the Church of St. Anthony, the Padovian saint of saints, is full to overflowing of all sorts and kinds of curiosities . . . and outside its doors is Donatello's splendid equestrian statue in bronze of that tremendous hireling captain, Gattamelato, (query Guttamalata?) This very questionable sort of hero, and his son to boot, have magnificent monuments also within the church. There is at least one obvious and consolatory observation which suggests itself in travelling through this country, and which speaks, in one direction at least, of an improvement in human judgment, universally. Mere brute animal courage, or hardihood of nerve, was more honoured formerly than it is now. A larger portion of intellect is required in our day to constitute a hero, than sufficed to obtain a statue for the Gattamelato of Padua.

Would you believe that I had really visited this venerable seat of learning, if I failed to tell you

that we have eaten ices in the Pedrocchi coffee-house? They tell me that it is the largest coffee-house in the world, and I do not feel the slightest difficulty in believing this; for it exceeds in extent the very largest stretch to which coffee-house imagination can reach....as far at least as my faculties enable me to judge. And now farewell!... I must pack up my writing-desk, which is not to be opened again till I reach Venice.

LETTER III.

Arrival at Venice.—Byron and Milnes.—Enough left in Venice to admire.—The startling Novelty of every Scene.—Luxury of a Gondola.—Sunset on the Grand Canal.—The Beauty of its Serpentine Line.—St. Mark's Church.

Venice, October, 1841.

“HAVE you swam in a gondola?” If you have not, there is a wide difference between us ; so great a difference indeed, that I really scarcely know how to talk to you in a way that shall be perfectly intelligible. . . . I have entered upon a new state of existence, which, while it lasts, places me at a prodigious distance in advance of all those who have still for the first time to traverse “the still lagune.”

I am very often, when greatly struck by some new spectacle, fearful of expressing what it makes me feel ; affectation, hyperbole, exaggeration, are accusations that seem perpetually staring me in the face ; but if I speak of Venice at all, I must arm myself in *proof*, and care not for the scoffers who either have not seen, or seeing, did not feel, the marvellously un-dull realities of this most wonderful city. I have heard of places ex-paro-

chial, which have peculiar privileges and peculiar penalties annexed to them, and Venice may, I think, be called ex-earthly, and, in like manner, both boast of and deplore her singularity. The intense pleasure, the immoderate admiration, the almost intoxicating excitement produced by the splendid novelty and the novel splendour of every object that meets the eye, is often checked by the reflection that not only in beauty and in splendour is she alone, but in dependance also; for every morsel she eats, and every drop of pure water that she drinks, must come from that same prosaic terra firma which she seems to have started from in pettish pride.

I might, I think, defy you to conceive any thing much more unlike the world you live in than is that which I inhabit now. . . . There are particular points of view that Canaletto has represented with admirable accuracy and effect; nevertheless, the most watery amongst them carries no startling assurance with it that *all* is water; . . . nothing that can be either said or painted can possibly convey any full, true, and adequate idea of what all must feel on approaching Venice. The manner of the approach, too, is so entirely new, so unlike any movement to which we have ever submitted ourselves before, that, as I have told you already, I seem to have entered upon a new state of existence. Considering how much charming poetry has been poured out in descriptions of

Venice, I am surprised to find that so few of the graphic passages have left true portraits on my mind. I think that Byron's verses have gone nearest to preparing me for its visible aspect; while Milnes' light morsels which, for power of penetrating as they go, and leaving marks of having touched you, are like winged arrows tipped with steel these have more forestalled the feelings it inspires. The first thirteen lines of the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* are excellent, not only from being exquisitely poetical, but from painting the scene with extraordinary truth, as well as brightness. But, as an echo to the emotions inspired by the view of Venice, the following lines by Milnes are, to my feelings, worth a thousand of those in which *Childe Harold* groans in lamentation over her decline : —

“ Who talks of vanished glory, and dead power,
Of things that were, and are not ? Is he here ?
Can he take in the glory of this hour,
And call it all the decking of a bier ? ”

This quotation is from “ Lines written by Moonlight ; ” but it is not only to that hour they are applicable ; the still existing splendour of Venice, as seen by sun or moon, or even by the glorious stars, which shine here as brightly as they do in the tropics, deserves them now as fully as in the days of her greatest political power.

If, indeed, instead of looking about you, and permitting your spirit to revel in the brightness of

the blue cloudless heaven, reflected in the watery highways on which you float or rejoice itself in the enchantment of endless architectural forms of beauty or in the rich colouring that seems to blend together every object into one harmonious whole or in that luxurious noiselessness, which lulls all the business and the movement of life into what has the repose of silence, without its sadness. . . . if, instead of all this, you *will* insist upon seeing the report of the number of vessels that have entered, or left the city, et cætera, et cætera, et cætera, you may certainly, in the place of being entranced with delight, find yourself pathetically mourning with Byron, in company with

“ The long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the dogeless city’s vanished sway.”

But is this wisdom? or is it in truth good taste or healthy sentiment? Byron indeed says —

—“ but beauty still is here.
States fall, arts fade — but Nature doth not die.”

This, if I may venture to say so, is not happy for if there be a spot upon God’s lovely earth which does *not* owe its charms to Nature, it is Venice. The sky is bright, and the air is clear, but beyond this Nature has wondrously little to do with the enchantment that seizes on the senses the moment you enter the dominion of this “ Sea Cybele.”

There is a freshness of wonder that attends every part of the progress through this floating world a piquant novelty, an untasted pleasure, that can only be described by comparing it with what we may presume might be the effect of magic, if some great enchanter took possession of us, and carried us through a world of unknown and unimagined loveliness, taking care to show us nothing that we had ever seen before.

Nevertheless, it is not the first sight of Venice, as you gradually approach it across the sleepy waters which divide it from the main, which produces the most powerful effect. . . . We *all* know that Venice rises from the sea ; and therefore, as we slowly and sedately approach her, we are in no way astonished at perceiving domes and towers before us, with no visible foundation to rest upon but the wave. . . . But it is necessary to get over all the little trumpery bustle of arrival, and to settle the working-day questions of where we are to be, and so forth, before it is possible to indulge in doing that, which perhaps for years you have most longed to do. . . . But all this tedious little work being performed, seat yourself in your gondola and sally forth, and then, if there be any truth in you, you will confess that never before, let your life have been long, short, still, or stirring, did you find yourself surrounded by such a scene of enchantment as this. . . . And if the profound interest of ceaseless historic reminiscences the glories of

the most graceful and imposing architecture
 the luxurious silence of the liquid streets the
 delicious clearness of the bright atmosphere
 the inconceivable blue of the sky, and of the wide
 mirror which reflects it if all this be not
 enough to fill your soul with joy, and gladness sufficient
 to shut out all lamentations concerning past
 supremacy, and present submission, then fill the
 aching void by sending for the annual average
 of state prisoners confined in the piombi and the
 pozzì, or any other touching documents concerning
 "things which were, but are not," which your
 sick fancy may lead you to long for.

But for those who will permit themselves to live
 for the present hour, and be contented to say,
 sufficient to the day is the beauty thereof, there is
 still more glory left in Venice, and a richer treasury
 of the products of human genius, than on any
 spot of earth beside Rome, I *suppose*, ex-
 cepted. Examine this wonderful creation of the
 head and hand of men, from the rude, but bold and
 effective science which drove the first piles upon
 which it stands, through the building and decorat-
 ing of its churches, the erection of its stupendous
 palaces, the incredible accumulations of its precious
 gems and marbles, up to the crowning glories of
 Titian and Palladio, Sansovino, Paul Veronese,
 Tintoretto, and the almost endless string of mighty
 names that follow look at it all, as it now
 stands; and then say if it be a fitting subject for

honest unaffected lamentation, or for saying that she

“ Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose.”

Instead of sinking, she floats so buoyantly and so beautifully, that, to my eye, she still looks triumphant triumphant over Nature, even though she neither buys nor sells so largely as formerly and that her doge, her Council of Ten, and her lion's mouth are no more.

And then as we look at her we float too, and with a perfection of lazy luxury that it is quite impossible to describe Why it is that the being carried along in a gondola is so totally unlike any other carrying along, I know not ; but it is so, and I doubt if the movement of a balloon would appear more novel to me than did my first voyage from our lodgings to the steps of St. Mark's Place. The soft black cushions into which you sink, the funereal hue and texture of both roof and sides of every boat you pass, with the dark curtain drawn across the front, and only removed, perhaps, to make for a moment visible a pair of flashing eyes, which, whether male or female, tell of comeliness and of character almost as far unlike any with which we are familiar in our northern land, as the vehicles in which they glide are to our rattling equipages But pray observe, that though we greatly delight in watching the po-peep sort of intercourse between the outward world and that

within, which we mark in the silent, sable, softly-gliding, or swiftly-dashing flotilla amidst which we move, we take good care not to be thus darkly enclosed ourselves. . . . Pretty nearly the first order we gave to the two men whom, with their gondola, we have engaged to attend upon us during our stay, was to remove the roof and palls of black cloth, which, however mysteriously picturesque we found them when used by others, would have been to us intolerable. . . . And thus indulged, no words can describe the new, the strange, the dazzling beauty that greets the happy eye, turn it which way you will.

Why, as I said before, the floating along in one of these Venetian boats should be so totally unlike floating along in any other, is one of the mysteries of the region, and quite beyond my power to explain. . . . There is none of the jerking movement experienced in ordinary rowing. . . . What the individuals stationed at the head and stern, in the most elegant attitudes imaginable, may be doing, I cannot pretend to say but assuredly it is not rowing yet on you go smoothly, softly, silently, till you are soothed into a state that seems to leave no sensation awake, but a most delicious dreamy consciousness of pleasure ; and at one and the same moment you become so lulled, and so excited, that you may be apt straightway to forget what manner of man you are, and fancy that you have been transported to realms

as strange as those visited of yore by Bishop Berkeley.

Our lodging, which is one of the very few private apartments to be found in Venice, is delightfully situated upon the Grand Canal, about half way between the Rialto and St. Mark's; and so great is the beauty of the scene we look upon from our drawing-room windows, that I sometimes feel as if it would be want of wisdom to leave them, even to get into the gondola which waits so commodiously at the steps below. But it will not do at Venice to act upon the respectable saw, "it is good to know when you are well;" for it perpetually happens here, that excellently well as you may find yourself in one place, you may find yourself better still in another.

The setting of the sun is almost every where an hour of beauty, but at Venice it is particularly so; and I should recommend every one who wishes to be entranced by the effect of this extraordinary city, seen to the greatest possible advantage, to let their first excursion be taken about an hour before the waves of the Adriatic are turned to liquid gold, in order to become a fitting bath for the God of day. . . . Start from the Rialto, and let your course take you to the Bridge of Sighs. The unbearable source of light is then behind you, but his gold and purple glory will be thrown on every object that you pass while on either hand majestic structures, such as might float before the fancy of

an imaginative young architect in a dream, open successively upon the eye as the gondola glides onward, along the broad sweep of the serpentine canal.

We must, I suppose, presume that this serpentine course of the Grand Canal, which in its whole extent through the fairy city takes the form of a deeply indented S, was suggested by the accidents of deep and shallow water, and of the difficulties and facilities of obtaining foundations for the magnificent buildings which border it ; but had no difficulties whatever existed, and beauty been the only object, no line could have been more successfully chosen. As in the High Street of Oxford, the architectural splendour does not stretch itself before you in a straight line, offering no variety as you advance, save what arises from a nearer view of the successive edifices ; but as the graceful curve proceeds, a towering dome, a noble portico, a rich façade comes into sight, and the delighted eye is pampered with a succession of new and varied forms, each one seeking to aid the effect of the others. . . . The changing lights, too, which this changing course produces, increase prodigiously the beauty of the spectacle. For at one moment the eye, dazzled by excess of light, sinks before the radiance of the glowing scene, and the next reposes upon deep broad shadows, through which the mellowed reflections rise to the surface of the darkened mirror over which

you glide, with a beauty and distinctness inconceivable.

But I shall weary you with my raptures upon the general beauty of Venice before I have said a word of any one of its separate wonders. . . . I really believe that I am afraid to enter upon a detailed description of any thing for not only is there such an *embarras de richesse* as to make it exceedingly difficult to know where to begin, but take what particular object I may, I know I shall be involved in a sort of labyrinth of astonishment and admiration, which will make it exceedingly difficult to be intelligible. St. Marks, for instance how is it possible to describe St. Marks? If it were like any other church on Christian ground, I might speak of it, as one does of other churches, and talk of its height, length, and width. But even supposing that I had patience to write, and you to read, as accurate a statement of all this as measurement could give, you would not be at all nearer to any sort of acquaintance with this most barbarous and beautiful old structure. Neither as a whole, nor in detail, has it, to my feelings, the imposing dignity of a fine Gothic cathedral but it is rich almost to excess, and curious to a degree that it is quite impossible to conceive without seeing it. The general impression on entering is, that you are got into a splendid mosque. This may not indeed be the case with those who know better what a

mosque is than I do; but the serpentine columns, the chequered-work of gold and precious stones in compartments, the floor of jasper and of porphyry, the golden roof, the five hundred columns of every brilliant marble in the world, most of them of Saracenic form, the black and white among them making more obvious the splendid varieties of the rest, altogether form something so totally unlike a church of any kind that I have seen before, that the idea of Eastern magnificence suggested itself to me as the only prototype I could hit upon. The mosaic-work of this extraordinary edifice, both within and without, is of itself sufficient to render it a marvel. . . . The richness of the materials employed, and the incredible labour of their arrangement, are almost beyond belief; and you are tempted to fancy that what you look upon can hardly be as elaborately rich as it appears. The shrine containing the relics of St. Mark, or rather intended to contain them, is a miracle of splendour; but when we saw it it was locked up in a sort of separate sacristy, and was undergoing a most expensive repair, nearly completed. The famous shrine is known by the name of the *Pala d'Oro*, and is accounted to be the richest in the world. It is composed of gold, silver, an immense collection of precious stones, and inserted amongst them has a series of little enamel paintings, representing scenes from the Bible. It is said to

have been ordered at Constantinople by the Republic of Venice, in the tenth century. The relics of the saint also, as well as a multitude of other precious things, came from that same repository of rich and holy treasures; and the variety of rare objects thus acquired, and now deposited in the Basilica of St. Mark, might almost lead one to think that the Republic had raised this enormous pile for the express purpose of receiving all the spoils collected there. Nevertheless, the church of St. Mark has other treasures than those gained from Constantinople. The works of the great Venetian artists are found there in rich abundance. Sansovino is seen in great perfection, and his famous gates, leading to the vestry, may be contemplated with satisfaction for hours. The four bronze evangelists in the choir are also his. Leopardò, Alberghetti, the brothers Massegne, and the brothers Lombardo, have all largely contributed to the beauty and the splendour of this universal museum. . . . But it is in vain to catalogue them. . . . The whole edifice is a treasury of abounding power, abounding wealth, and abounding art; and occupies the eyes and the intellect till they are weary enough to long for the soft black cushions, and the gentle movement of the gondola, to convey them elsewhere.

LETTER IV.

Palace of the Doge.—Its Exterior familiar to every one.—Gloom of the Private Entrance.—The Bridge of Sighs.—The Prison Walls.—Paintings of Titian and of Tintoretto.—Hall of the Senate.—Hall of the Council of Ten.—Portraits of the Doges.—That of Marino Faliero wanting.—Paintings of the Grand Council Chamber.—Antiques.—Library.—MSS. of Dante.—Map of the World.—History of Venice.—Her Dungeons.—St. Mark's Place.—The Coffee Houses.—Late Hours.

Venice, October, 1841.

THE external architecture of the ducal palace is as familiar to our eyes as the form of our own parish church for this we have to thank Canaletto. . . . But where is the art or the artist that may convey an adequate idea of its interior? The intense historic interest of every inch of it, the romance, the poetry, the very terror that its name awakens, are all so many sources of strange and new delight. As I walked through its echoing halls, I felt as if surrounded by a crowd of spectres It is not by the Giant's Stair that strangers enter the building in order to see the state apartments; that noble approach from the Place of St. Mark is mounted afterwards, as it leads to other parts of the enormous edifice. . . . It is not well possible that any thing can be

more stern and gloomy than the private entrance which freely now admits the idle traveller light of heart, and light of foot, who has privilege to come, and power to go, whenever the whim takes him. To him its gloom matters little but during the

“ Thirteen hundred years of *freedom* gone,”

that Lord Byron mourns over, when it admitted only the licensed throng, composed of tyrants and of slaves, from the Doge himself to the humble retainer upon his greatness, how many aching hearts must have passed under it! This dark entrance is from the narrow canal that divides the palace from the prisons, and across which is thrown the well-known Bridge of Sighs, which connects them together. Another bridge, for the convenience of the walkers passing from the quay before the palace to that before the prison, must be passed under, in order to arrive at the watery portico by which the palace is approached; and when, all the brightness of the Grand Canal being left behind, the gondola has shot this little bridge, it seems to be taking you at once into the very depth of that iron gloom which the imagination has for ever and for ever thrown around the very name of the Venetian prisons. . . . When the boat stops, the Bridge of Sighs hangs high before you, connecting the upper story of the prisons with a floor of equal altitude with the palace; and the dark walls of

both rise higher above your head than the eye can reach, while the frowning portico, with its dark steps, which no sun-beam ever reached, is lashed by the silent wave, that seems to flow stealthily up the narrow creek, as if it would perform a dismal errand secretly. . . . All this is in exact keeping with the foregone conclusions respecting this spot which we have all nourished in our fancies throughout life and this is one of the reasons which makes it so infinite a pleasure to be here.

Whether this historic palace of the Doge is architecturally beautiful as to its elevation, or not, I am perfectly unable to tell you. . . . All I know is, that I looked upon it with indescribable delight, and that it seemed to me a precious volume full of history, poetry, and romance. But when I got within it, I found delight of another kind, that had, perhaps, less of fancy in it, and of which, therefore, I may venture to speak with more confidence the pictures of Titian, in this the arena of his glory, where he performed his greatest works, near to which he was born, and where, full of honour, he died, wanting but one single year of a century. The pictures of Titian, at Venice, produced an effect somewhat like that of cultivating the intimacy of a man at home, after having more slightly known him abroad. This mighty painter, together with Tintoretto, Paul Veronese, and some other great, though lesser names, have left works here, calculated not only to immortalise them-

selves, but also the republic, in whose service they laboured, and whose deeds, both of arms and of policy, they record with a splendour of detail, and on an unsparing magnitude of scale, which really make all the pictures seen before seem but little miniatures drawn for a lady's boudoir. Were their enormous size, however, their only or their chief recommendation, the impression left would be of a far different kind. . . . They are not only splendid in composition, and admirable in execution, but have a warm vigour of life about them that is most extraordinary. The picture known by the name of "The Doge Marino Grimani's Faith" is considered as a chef d'œuvre of Titian's pencil, and is in truth a wonderful picture, so full of life and truth, that we almost fancy the scene it represents is passing before us. Tintoretto, too, is seen here in great perfection, and with a degree of freshness and of splendour which shows both that he worked with ardour and for the spot where the pictures still hang uninjured. Paul Veronese, always and ever the most gorgeous of painters, is at Venice more gorgeous still. . . . But here, as elsewhere, I felt that, admirable and magnificent as he is, there is never much time left to spare for him when Titian hangs near him. It was with reverence, rather than with admiration, that we contemplated a figure in fresco upon a staircase, said to be the only morsel of fresco remaining of Titian's in Venice. It appears to be very carefully

preserved, but it is greatly faded. The Hall of the Pregadi made me quake, for the senators' stalls are still there; and the chamber of the Council of Ten would have been more awful still, I suppose, were it not that nothing remained to remind me who it was that used to sit there, or where and how they placed their awful persons, as in the case of the Senate Chamber.

The ceiling of this Council of Ten room is by Paul Veronese, and most magnificent. In the old hall of the Great Council, are the portraits of many Doges, hung close together in a series all being in similar frames, and all of the same size. The frame of this series which produces the strongest effect though there are many goodly faces, and well painted too, amongst them. . . . is that within which, instead of the "counterfeit presentment" of a man, is a black board containing this inscription: *Hic est locus Marino Faliero, decapitati pro criminibus*. There is something horribly ghastly in this, and I shuddered as if I had seen the headless trunk of the unfortunate offender.

The grand hall of the Great Council, which is the finest room I ever entered, has so much in it, that were it less enormous, it would be awkwardly crowded; but as it is, even the prodigious paintings seem almost lost in its vastness. Tintoretto's "Glory of Paradise" is here, but disappointed me, because I had heard it greatly vaunted, and had hoped to see something as noble as his great altar-

piece in the old castle near Munich but whereas *that* is all sublime poetry, this seems only an elephant folio of nonsense verses, where, if there be the rhyme of art, there is none of the reason of composition the whole canvass giving a feeling of violent confusion, that is absolutely painful. Besides the enormous pictures which spread themselves over the walls, there is a charming collection of antique marbles, many among them being of an excellence that even there, where there is so much to divide the attention, holds the spectator spell-bound. But both pictures and statues are but accessories; for this noble room has recently been made the depository of the celebrated library of St. Mark. Of this extremely valuable collection Petrarch is said to have laid the foundation, by presenting to the city his collection of manuscripts; partly, as we may suppose, from a very natural feeling of ambition; and partly, it is said, as a testimony of gratitude for the gracious reception he received when he took refuge here from the plague. . . . There is a manuscript of the Gospels here, said to be a thousand years old, but not having any introduction to the librarian, we could not see it. With all respect for the celebrated republic of Venice, it certainly seems doubtful whether they either knew or cared much about the literary treasures confided to their keeping. Though one account states that Petrarch's noble benefaction remained for years forgotten, in a small

chamber in St. Mark's Church, close behind the Corinthian horses, and that a large proportion of them were there destroyed by damp and though there be others who deny this, it is certain that it was as late as 1826 that a learned German discovered and published, for the first time, many, till then, unknown verses of Dante. Among them is a canzone addressed to the Emperor Henry VII., in which he praises him in a tone of affectionate zeal, that seems to come direct from the heart ; and it is easy to trace here, as elsewhere, the magnificent project which the poet had conceived, and long treasured in his heart, of the union of all the states of Italy into one empire. It is impossible not to perceive that the change which may be discovered in his feelings, from a devoted love to his fair Florence, and her boasted independence, to this strongly pronounced wish that she should be merged into one general empire, formed by all Italy, arose from what he had witnessed as the effect of republican anarchy. His own sufferings were probably father to the thought ; but it is evident that the more he dwelt upon it, the dearer to him it became. In the canzone to Henry he says,

“ Nòl vinse mai superbia nè avarizia
Anzi l'avversità 'l facea possente,
Che magnanimamente
Ben contrastasse a chiunque il percosse.”

A sort of eulogium this, which might with perfect justice have been applied to the divine poet himself.

The celebrated map of the world contained in this library, and drawn by a monk in 1460, is most marvellously correct, considering how much of it was guess-work.

Immediately above this map is placed the very prettiest bit of antique sculpture that I have ever seen the carrying away of Ganymede by the eagle. The look of intellectual spirit so magically given to the eagle has indeed something god-like in it. . . . Taken all together, manuscripts, pictures, marbles, and its own majestic vastness, I doubt if the whole world can show a chamber worthy of equal veneration. . . . And when the attention can be sufficiently withdrawn from what is in the room to permit the looking out of it through the windows, the evidences of *where you are*, whether looking forth upon the great canal, or into the court of the historic old palace, are so strong, that the mere locality is sufficient to awaken such a crowd of thoughts as suffice to people the whole region, and make you live backwards through a thousand years.

No one should go to Venice, if they can help it, till, in college phrase, they have "got up" its history. From its very earliest commencement to its present hour it is one long well-sustained romance. . . . From the time that Attila drove forth by the barbarities of his red right hand the terrified inhabitants of Aquilia, Concordia, Odessa, Altino, and Padova, to find a refuge from fire and sword in

the islands of the lagunes, to the taking possession of Venice and its dependencies by Austria, there is an isolation and distinctness in its historic interest that is singularly analagous to its position; and the narrow limits of the locality in which its enormous power and wealth were centred render every inch of it important, and every stone historic. In latter days the "ships, colonies, and commerce," which the modern Attila, with very profound *connaissance de choses*, so ardently, but so vainly wished for, have produced a power sufficiently strong to protect a handful of islanders against the world; and it was power born of kindred parentage which made Venice what she was through the long hour of her greatness. . . . The manner in which this concentration of wealth and influence enabled her to take care of herself while broader lands were ransacked, pillaged, and laid waste, is quite admirable . . . and so also is the skill with which, by closer concentration still, this power was made to centre in a few, and, like the principle of life in the heart, to give energy and movement to the whole body, by machinery as simple as it was powerful. . . . All this was admirably arranged for keeping Venice and her magnificent aristocracy *free* from all affronts and interference from without; but to confound this with popular freedom is being very strangely caught by a word . . . and yet many who sing of the glorious freedom of republican Venice in her palmy days have evidently

some notion that she had a sort of primogenitive right to all the privileges of a red cap and tri-coloured banner. Had this been the case, *soyez sur*, that her "thirteen hundred years" would have been very considerably curtailed.

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Having gone through that part of the palace where the full blown purple pomp, of which we have heard so much, was wont to install itself and through that part also in which the legislative wisdom on which she fixed her well-placed trust, sat to keep guard over her, we were led to another portion of the stately edifice, which I doubt not, in its day, and in its way, contributed also to the preservation of the great republic.

Having entered a small room which opened upon the colonnade that surrounds one of the internal courts of the palace, we were received by a functionary, who desired us to be seated, and then left us for a few minutes, after which he returned with a bundle of very historic-looking keys and a wax taper. He told us to follow him, and we did so through one or two obscure-looking rooms, which appeared to make part of his own lodgings and then we reached a passage, and then a door, which, being opened, admitted us to a narrow staircase, at first, I think, ascending for a few steps, and then, after turning and twisting about a little, quite in the proper style for the errand we were upon, we descended into dark damp passages,

which led to a succession of underground dungeons. . . . Such deliberate preparation for human suffering is a sickening sight . . . and I know not well why it is that all the world, with very few exceptions, take every possible opportunity of looking at the like. . . . I, for one, would not pass within reach of a horrible dungeon without seeing it upon any account; and all my life through I have gone on doing the same thing, though it never fails of making me feel exceedingly uncomfortable.

“ Say why is this ? . . . Wherefore ? . . . What should it mean ? ”

I have never yet found a ghost able to answer me the question. . . . At Venice, however, if nowhere else, there does seem something like reason in visiting the dungeons; they make a striking feature in her history, and a stirring part of our interest concerning her. Excepting the lowest in the progressively deplorable dungeons of Ratisbon, and the actual *oubliette* at Baden-Baden, I remember no dwellings so horrible as these. Their being not only deep under ground, but deep under water, as the lowest among them are, increases greatly the idea of their pernicious dampness, and, I suppose, of the reality also. The one among them most calculated to inspire a shudder, however, is not one of the lowest, but is on a level with a low door that opens upon the canal, and which may be seen in turning from the Grand Canal towards the Bridge of Sighs,

it being nearly at the corner of the building, and only a few yards distant from the steps under the portico leading to the great court. It was in a small room on this level that such offenders as were to shut their eyes upon the world in private received their *coup de grace*, their bodies being disposed of, during the night, by means of the door close by, which opens upon the canal. These silent executions were performed, we were told, by means of a mechanical contrivance, which caused a sort of chair, on which the prisoner was made to place himself, to strangle him the instant he sat down. The prisoners confined in the still viler cells below were sometimes, our cicerone said, restored to light and liberty; but those consigned to the room beside the *low door*, NEVER. We took some pains to decipher the characters traced on the cell where the unhappy priest was confined who was one of the latest victims of the Venetian Inquisition; but Lord Byron must either have been furnished with a stronger light when he copied them than that which we took with us, or else the last twenty-three years must have rendered the characters less legible. The four lines beginning

“ Non ti fidar ad alcuno, pensa, e taci.”

we made out perfectly, but not the rest.

Having remained quite as long in these horrible *pozzi* as was at all agreeable, and as some of the

party, I believe, thought, a little longer, we returned to the level of the earth I think I cannot say correctly to the *surface* of it, and then we began to mount a good deal above it. The last part of this upward progress was by an obscure stair that led us to some very miserably hot garrets, immediately under the leads of the palace.

All traces of imprisonment, however, in these *piombi* are now removed, and the place only looks like a wretched enough attic ; but our cicerone told us, and indeed showed marks upon the floor which seemed to confirm the statement, that when this part of the palace was used as prisons, there were interior cells constructed, excluding the prisoner almost entirely from light and air, and rendering his lofty position perceptible to himself only by the intense heat of the sun upon the leads, which were but a foot or two above him. These hateful *piombi* were not used for the detention of prisoners whom it was intended to make away with, or to imprison for years, but only as a species of punishment, by which torture was inflicted, with little trouble and no fuss.

I can by no means imagine for what reason that very intelligent guide-writer Monsieur Valery (to whom I owe many thanks for sending me to see many things which I should never have heard of without him) should have undertaken to paint so very much *en beau* these horrible prisons of the Venetian Inquisition. Our copy of this gentleman's

very useful, though sometimes comical guide, is in English, and contains the following expressions. . . . “The piombi were *only* the upper parts of the ducal palace, just under the leads, and the prisoners passed the periods of their imprisonment there without injury to their health *there being a current of air sufficient to counteract any excess of heat.*” Any one acquainted with the climate of Italy may judge how pleasant this must have been in the warm season ! And again, “the prisoner there was never loaded with irons, a privilege, perhaps, unique in the history of prisoners. . . . If many were confined there for life (meaning in the pozzi), it was owing to the punishment of death being more rarely inflicted in Venice than elsewhere.” If this ingenious traveller be not himself one of the new growth of inquisitors, of whom we hear a good deal just now, as a species of *cinquecento renaissance*, likely to become the fashion again for a short period of rococo celebrity, it is difficult to comprehend his reasons for so very strange a misrepresentation.

For the purpose of leaving the palace we were conducted to the door of entrance immediately opposite the Giant’s Stairs, and near beside this door were made to remark the once dreaded receptacle of all the political scandal of Venice. The now innoxious cavity had nothing more mischievous within it than a little dust, but yet it seemed to have a voice still, and told horrible tales of the

mischievous and cowardly injury of which it had been the vehicle. The lion's head no longer covers the outside of the aperture, which has now very nearly the appearance of a yawning ill-made letter-box. The position of this pernicious letter-box is so very public that none could ever have approached it unseen, excepting during the hours of darkness; and even then, the constant going and coming, likely to continue both late and early, at such a spot, must have made a secret resort to it a business of difficulty and danger. The descent into St. Mark's Place, by the Giant's Stair, is exquisitely picturesque. As you advance into the piazza, the beauty, the surpassing beauty of the scene, develops itself gradually, till, as you reach the centre, you may turn round, look about you, and be very sure that no where else on earth could you find yourself within reach of such a spectacle. The majestic area, with its noble colonnade, its parti-coloured blinds, its brilliant shops, all so brightly characteristic so perfectly Venetian. . . . On one side, the eastern-looking, low-browed, gaily-tinted church, with its brazen horses so marvelously alive, that you might fancy they were about to spring down upon the pavement on the other, the towering campanile, with the elegant loggia at its feet. . . . Before you the proud lion of St. Mark, once more upon his pedestal, and looking as if it was his purpose to keep watch and ward there still and beyond him the

broad canal, Palladio's graceful structures rising on its banks, and its bosom covered with dark gondolas, dashing, like the noiseless lizard, athwart the sunshine, and disappearing under the shadows at its sides. Often as I have already returned to this spot, the effect it produces on me is in no degree lessened. . . . I still think that, setting the great marvels of Nature aside, it is the most striking and absorbing spectacle I have ever looked upon.

It seems the universal custom here to assemble in the evening, or I should rather say, at night, in the Piazza San Marco, and there to remain till long after the time that the public resorts in other cities are forsaken. On three or four evenings of the week a good military band is stationed there for the amusement of the company; and then the whole of the immense area is very nearly as full as a popular theatre, there being barely space enough to permit parties, when tired of sitting before the coffee-houses and ice-shops beneath the colonnades, to promenade with tolerable convenience. . . . We have already adopted the habit of the place; and after a twilight, starlight, or moon-light expedition up and down the great canal, repair hither to the front of Florien's coffee-house, and remain there sipping coffee, eating ices, and chatting with one or two agreeable new friends, till what seems to me an extremely late hour for such *al fresco* occupation. But though we are in the middle of October, nobody

appears to think there can be any rational reason for preferring your own drawing-room to Florien's wide-spreading awning ; and every body tells me, that if I would but remain there, like the natives, till two or three o'clock in the morning, I should only find the air become more and more delicious, and the enjoyment of the company more animated.

We brought but six letters of introduction with us to Venice, and even these have not been available, as the families have not yet returned from their summer residences, except in two cases . . . both of these being English families, and the only ones, I believe, who are permanently resident at Venice. . . . From both of these we have received great kindness, and having wonderfully little time to spare, feel disposed to be fully satisfied by the obliging attentions we receive from them, and the very sufficient local information they give us . . . which really leaves no room for regret that we have not a larger acquaintance. To say the truth, by the time we re-enter our gondola after the nightly promenade at St. Mark's, we most of us seem to think that it is time the day should end for us. Far different may very naturally be the feelings of the gay Venetians, who, instead of passing the whole of a long morning, as we do, in floating and flitting from church to church, from palace to palacè, and from gallery to gallery, usually remain in bed, as I am told, till about two o'clock in the afternoon. . . . And even then, if report says true,

their hours are not spent in great activity. . . . The ladies, at least, being rather celebrated for avoiding all out-of-door intercourse with the sun, and rarely making their appearance *en plein air* till he has taken his departure to the west. This mode of existence most surely would not suit me long, but its very strangeness is for the moment agreeable ; and while I am here, I would have nothing changed from what it is, though quite aware the while that I should not like it long. Excessively as I enjoy, and infinitely as I admire Venice, I never feel for a moment beguiled into the belief that I could wish to live here. Not, however, that any thing in the very slightest degree approaching to privation of any kind would appear to threaten those who reside here. . . . The fruit is among the finest we have seen . . . and had I not been so long in Florence, I should say that flowers, too, were abundant . . . the vegetable market is very well supplied for the season. . . . The opera, I believe, fully as good as most in Italy at the present moment . . . the shops of all kinds most abundantly supplied, and no symptom in any direction that the few miles of water which divide the magnificent city from her supplies are ever likely to occasion the slightest inconvenience. . . . Nevertheless, I should not like to think that Venice was to be my home. . . . Were I younger, perhaps, and less closely wedded, by long use, to all from which she so widely differs . . . it might be otherwise,

and my zealous admiration and delighted wonder might lead me to wish for long years that should be passed in gazing at her unequalled splendour, and luxuriating in the sweet repose of her gondolas. . . . But as it is, I feel, as I remember in my youthful days to have felt at some great fête or festival delighted, charmed, amused, and happy, almost to excess; yet never dreaming that any thing so strangely beautiful could endure or even if it could, that I should always wish to stay and look at it. Even in the midst of all my admiration and delight, I have a constant feeling that nothing which I see is natural. The production of Venice was a prodigious *tour de force*, worthy to be seen, and wondered at, by all men, but in no way connected with our ordinary mode of living, and having no more to do with it than the tournament of Lord Eggleton or the coronation of Queen Victoria.

LETTER V.

The Academia delle Belle Arti. — The Assumption. — Christ on the Steps of the Temple. — Peter Martyr. — Canova. — The Barbarigo Palace. — Convent of the Armenians. — Lord Byron. — The Madhouse. — Mr. Milne. — The Campanile. — The Protestant Burying Ground. — The Confraternity of San Rocca. — Tintoretto. — Memorial of the Plague.

Venice, October, 1841.

THE senses are so dazzled and almost bewildered, I think, on arriving here, that we are tempted at first to run (or rather swim) up and down, staring at one thing, peeping at another, and endeavouring to find our way about the strange new world, much as a cat does on arriving at a new abode. Several days were thus employed, I will not say wasted, before we felt at leisure to devote a morning to the Academy “delle Belle Arti,” . . . but at length, *nous voila* on the step of the quay that leads to it. As usual we told our gondoliers to wait, but they knew what we were about better than we did ourselves, and sagaciously asked if they had not better go to dinner.

Is there any thing that so bewilders the pen as the attempt to lead a friend with one into a gallery of first-rate pictures? . . . It is wisest, per-

haps, to part at the door, and to say, on returning, "go in" or "do not go in," according to our notions of what we have found there. . . . *More than this* comes, I am sadly afraid, from the mere love of talking. It will not, therefore, be so much for your sake, as for that of indulging myself a little, if I say any thing about the pictures here, for I am perfectly aware that I might go on for ever, without making you understand an atom more about them than you do at present.

You have heard, you know, of the Assumption the capo d' opere of Titian, which had been hanged, rather than hung, at the very top of the Frari, and, like its author, buried beneath the roof of that dark old church. . . . This marvel of marvels, when it was discovered some score of years ago by that blessed man called Cicognara, was absolutely covered by a coat of damp black dust, which rendered even its subject undiscernible. . . . The curious and learned Cicognara however, being happily seized with a fit of artistique research, caused himself to be hoisted to a level with the canvass, and having applied to it, by the aid of his pocket-handkerchief, that well-known test with which artists and amateurs are happily provided by nature, he speedily discovered enough of the handling of what was beneath the black veil, to induce his taking immediate measures for having it brought down and cleaned. It is only after you have seen it, that you will be able to understand the extent

of the obligation which the world owes to the Count Leopoldo Cicognara. . . . The picture, though still the property of the Frari, now hangs at the Belle Arti, where Austria, the conservator of all that is left in Venice, chooses that it should remain for the present, thinking the well-aired apartments of that institution more favourable to its restored health than the climate of the venerable fane in which it had caught the disfiguring malady which had so long permitted it to remain incog. When I tell you that the composition consists of the Virgin, surrounded by a choir of angel children in the upper part, and a group of disciples and other holy men below, watching her ascension, you will immediately fancy that, however well painted, this can only be a specimen of the thousand-and-one pictures, good, bad, and indifferent, wherein the mysticism of the painter has misled him into the conception of something monstrous and incongruous, though perhaps exceedingly pious, and even beautiful. But "lay not such flattering unction to your soul," by way of consolation for not having seen it.

I think that Titian must have dreamed the composition, and so caught a glimpse, as does sometimes happen in dreams, of more heaven-like beauty and glory than can be suggested by what we see on earth. The cloud on which the Virgin rises, and which turns out its golden lining around her and her choir of angels, throws those who gaze upwards as she quits them into shade, and leaves

them *mortal* while the pure mother, as she mounts, is herself so visibly putting on immortality, that it is necessary to be a very good Protestant, not to fall down and worship. There is a gentle *lasciare fare* composure in her attitude as she mounts, that suggests the idea of yielding to the mysterious power that wafts her up, while the head and the position of the neck speaks an eager aspiration for the glory that awaits her, which shows her already sentient of her immortality. In alluding to this picture, and to the ineffable splendour thrown into the upper part of it, Milne says,

“ The glory into whose embrace
The Virgin pants to rise,
Is but reflected from the face
Of these Venetian skies.”

This phrase of “*pants to rise*,” is most happily descriptive of the expression of the head and neck.

I think that the troop of angel children which surround her amounts to thirty, and there is not one of them which might not separately be taken as a wonder of art, and a gem for the choicest cabinet that ever existed. But when looked at altogether, as a composition having one end and object, the volume of epic poetry that may be found in their grouping and expression is truly astonishing. The mind that went to the imagining all this to say nothing of the matchless execution must have been of the highest order, and

may help to convince us that no man can hope to reach an elevated place among the professors of this divine art, who is not something more than a painter.

Michael Angelo is said to have expressed astonishment at seeing Titian's works at Venice, and to have declared "che non avea creduto che l'arte potesse giungere a tanto, e che solo Tizione era degno del nome di pittore." It is easy to fancy such words pronounced by Michael Angelo, while standing before this picture of the Assumption.

In going upon this occasion to the Academy *delle Belle Arti*, we had fully intended to see the whole of the collection, which, though in every way splendid, is not immoderately large; but having entered the room containing the Assumption, we speedily found that the leaving it in time to see any thing else was quite out of the question —

"Quel giorno più non vi vedemmo avanti."

Our gondolieri had not only dined, but enjoyed ample leisure to digest their repast, and to chew the cud of whatever fancies might visit them, before they were required to take us away . . . far different, however, is the fate of a Venetian boatman from that of the miserable coachman who has to wait for "his people" on terra firma. . . . The poor Jehu has to sit listening to the wearisome monotony of the note by which one or more of the heels committed to his charge fail not to express im-

patience ; while the only variety arises from the rattling of other music, produced by a like encounter of flint and steel or else perhaps from the drowsy colloquy of some yawning brother of the whip, uneasily stretched in search of repose athwart his box, or supporting his sleeping head upon the roof of his carriage while the happy gondolier must bless every hour of delay which leaves him in possession of his soft cushions and if he can read, he may read, and if he can sing, he may sing, with no fear that any harsher sounds than those made by the light dipping of oars in water shall come near to torment him.

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It was not, therefore, till a day or two afterwards that we proceeded with our examination of this noble collection ; and well might both you and I tremble at what was before us, were I to take it into my head to be as verbose on all the pictures, as I have been on the only one which I have yet mentioned. But fear me not ! I will give you no catalogue for where is the use or benefit of telling you that the public picture gallery of Venice is a very fine one ? Nevertheless, there is again one picture of which I must say a word, if it were only to correct a strange blunder of my excellent companion Mrs. Starke, who in a strangely meagre notice of this collection names a picture which she calls " Titian's Presentation of the Virgin." As this is marked with double admiration

(11), and moreover named immediately after the Assumption, there can be no doubt that she means by the "Presentation of the Virgin," the celebrated picture commonly called the "Presentation of Jesus in the Temple," and in some books "Jesus on the steps of the Temple." It is the latter title which best describes the picture. The figure of Jesus at the age of eleven or twelve, firmly yet childishly mounting the steps of the temple, is indescribably lovely and the whole picture, including its fine architectural details, is truly magnificent. I thought the Peter Martyr here, by the same great master, superior to the same subject in the gallery at Bologna, by Domenichino. There are abundance more of splendid works, among which are several by Paul Veronese and the two Palmas, in the various rooms; but I promised not to give you a catalogue, and I must keep my word. Canova's name is great in Venice, and his right hand is enshrined in a vase of porphyry, which is inserted in the wall of one of the apartments of the Belle Arti below it is suspended the chisel which that right hand knew how to guide so ably. . . . The church of the Frari, the same in which Titian is buried, and in which his chef d'œuvre of the Assumption was found, contains an immense cenotaph to the memory of Canova. It is said to be after one of his own designs; and this may very possibly be the case, as the general outline strongly resembles the very magnificent mo-

nument by him, which Duke Albert of Saxe Teschen erected in the church of St. Augustine at Vienna, to the archduchess Christine. But nothing can be less alike, nevertheless, than the two monuments. That to the charitable archduchess is full of grace, sweetness, and pathos whereas the pile erected in honour of the modern Phidias suggests no idea but that of massiveness and great expense. The little square stone inserted by an obscure monk in the floor of the same church to the memory of Titian, is as much beyond it in its power of touching the feelings, as the other is in that of catching the eye.

The grave of Titian, who, after living ninety-nine years, fell a victim to the plague at last, was dug hastily, as ever happens under such circumstances, and the precise spot where *his* more wonderful right hand moulders, is not known; but near where he is supposed to lie, a monk of the conventualists has inserted the little plain slab above mentioned, and inscribed it with these words: —

“ Qui giace il gran Tiziano de' Vecelli,
Emulator de Zeusi, e degli Apelli.”

Of the churches of Venice I am almost as much afraid to speak, as of the pictures. I came here with a very impious sort of notion, that I should find the architecture of Palladio too full of ornament and devices for my taste; but I have been very satisfactorily convinced, since my arrival, that

the imaginings of ignorance are of little worth. There is a blending of grace and majesty in his works here, that gives a peculiar character to every scene in which they make a part; and they harmonise so exquisitely well with the delicate clearness of the atmosphere, the liquid smoothness of the clear mirror that every where reflects them, and the advantageous points of view which the fine reaches of the Grand Canal enable the spectator to obtain, that no where can the effect of beautiful architecture be felt more strongly. And yet, notwithstanding the startling brilliancy of the coup d'œil, which on first traversing this Grand Canal creates so strong a degree of pleasure and surprise, this general effect is less marvellous than the repetition and accumulation of various sights, all sources of wonder and admiration, which this extraordinary place continues to furnish, day after day, with an abundance that seems absolutely unbounded. We have now been here rather more than a week, and I think I have already seen within the churches and palaces of this sea-barriered city a greater accumulation of wealth in their gems, marbles, pictures, gildings, carvings, halls, frescoes, staircases, ceilings, columns, and cornices, than in all the other churches and palaces that I ever saw. The excess of this accumulation has completely astonished me, I confess for though I have all my life been reading of the past glory of Venice, of its wealth and its

greatness, I had no idea whatever that I should still find here such a well-preserved treasury of wealth. The marbles alone that have been made to traverse the seas in order to line the multitude of gorgeous churches in Venice, when seen as we have seen them in rapid succession, amount to something almost incredible, both as to their wonderful variety and the labour bestowed upon them. Statues seem as abundant as leaves upon the trees in a summer grove, and you might suppose that works in relievo cost no more trouble than paper filagree. The pictures, too, are of a splendour, a glow of colouring, and a sumptuousness of detail that would be sought in vain elsewhere. Milne says, and very truly, of these Venetian painters, —

. “ Their eyes,
Taught by this sun and sea,
Flash’d on their works those burning dyes,
That fervent poetry !
And wove the shades so thinly clear,
They would be parts of light
In northern climes.”

I rejoice to say that at the present moment it would be very *statistically* incorrect to say that Venice was perishing. That the work of destruction had begun, and was rapidly progressing, is undoubtedly true, when speaking of some few years ago ; but it is so no longer. Austria is certainly not at all likely to restore to Venice the aristocratic power of her old republic ; but as long

as the city is in her hands the *politically indifferent* connoisseurs may set their hearts at rest concerning her condition. Nothing that is left will be suffered to deteriorate further, unless, indeed, it should be doomed to destruction by the will of the actual possessor, in which case, of course, the rights of private property must and will interfere with the inclination which the present government has so clearly manifested to preserve whatever is either curious or valuable. That there are several of the fine old palaces which have for very many years past been suffered to ask in vain for repair, is most certain; and it is not improbable that some of these must fall victims to decay, it being already too far advanced to leave any rational hope of stopping it. I am afraid that the beautiful palace of the Foscari will be among these. The very title to it is doubtful, they say; and therefore no one has a right to enter upon and repair it, however much they might wish to do so.

There is also another palace which, although its goodly walls still stand unshaken, shows symptoms of the unchecked mischief of time within them in a manner and to a degree that is truly grievous. This unhappy Palazzo Barbarigo contains many of what *were* among the finest cabinet pictures of Titian. The ancestors of the noble family to whom it still belongs, were among the dearest and latest patrons and friends of the great artist: he resided for many of his last years in this their

palace; his latest works were executed within its walls; and there he died.

In no other spot does the decay into which Venice is said to have fallen show itself with such painful distinctness as here. I had been told long before I entered it, that this Palazzo Barbarigo was the very centre and nucleus of Titian's glory and so it may have been, and so it might be still, had the commonest care been given to the alas! *not* immortal works he left there. Closely connected by friendship with the Barbarigo family, it was under their roof, as I have said, that he resided, and there that he made his studio, during many of his latter years, leaving it at his death full of a multitude of precious morsels which were doubtless bequeathed to the dear friends with whom he was domesticated; for they seem to have become heir-looms of their race, and there certainly appears to have existed throughout all the successive generations of this noble family a very laudable desire to keep the collection entire. . . . Not a thread of canvass touched by Titian has ever, I dare say, been parted with either "for love or money" by any of the Barbarigo race during the four centuries that they have been the owners and guardians of this remarkable collection. But that was not the only reverence which it demanded at their hands.

Undoubtedly it is highly interesting to be told and to believe, that no atom of this precious

canvass, amidst the numerous finished and unfinished pictures which cover it, has ever been touched since Titian died. With the exception of the well-known anecdote of the fastidious Barbarigo who insisted upon a scarf being thrown over the shoulders of the Venus (and which was afterwards scratched off again), this assurance is given, and I am told may be safely received literally. . . . In truth, I am inclined to doubt if they have ever been even dusted and the natural and inevitable consequence of such *reverence* is, that many of them are totally ruined, and *all* more or less injured.

The well-known Magdalene, well known both by copies and engravings that exquisite epitome of penitence and sorrow is so encrusted with dirt, vulgar, ordinary, every-day and every-year dirt, that it is pretty nearly impossible even to guess what its original tone may have been. The well-known coarse, many-coloured rug that is wrapped round her may still be tolerably well discerned, as to colour, but the carnations are most cruelly marred, and little is left but the matchless expression of the lovely face, and the dimpled roundness of the hands and arms but as to colour, the "poor Syrian girl" might have been an Ethiope.

Nor is the venerable dirt of four ages all that she has had to endure. There is great reason to fear that damp, as well as dirt, has been busy with

her. Upon a close inspection of the canvass it is evident that in many parts it is giving way, and in more still the colour has mouldered off, giving melancholy proof that it is not under all circumstances quite unperishable. The famous Venus which hangs opposite to it, and which seems to have been intended as a *pendant*, as may be guessed by the exact similarity of the two splendid cinque-cento frames, is not in a much better condition and as to the several famous portraits of doges, and one of Francis I. (the obscure features just serving to recal his brilliant brother of Paris), as to all these and a *multitude* of other pictures by the same unequalled hand, they are literally little better than mouldering relics. A terrible old humbug of a housekeeper, who showed them to us, confessed that no fire ever was or ever could be made in the rooms containing the collection; but assured us very earnestly that it had never been found at all necessary, and that, moreover, the danger of destroying such invaluable treasures by fire would render the introducing it a *real sin!* "Oh, no!" she repeated, "there never was a fire near them."

I am no great friend to very bold picture cleaning; and retouching, under any circumstances, I hold to be a sin of presumption: but the species of sacred care bestowed on the Barbarigo Titians would reconcile one to almost any

kind of protection for them which might lead to a different result.

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I have made a multitude of notes upon the multitude of treasures which we have seen in the multitude of churches and of galleries with which Venice is filled and I hope I shall find them useful as memoranda which may enable me to recal to mind many things that I should be sorry to forget but so enormous is the accumulation of rich and interesting objects in Venice, that any attempt at rehearsing them must be equally tedious and abortive. Whoever wishes to conceive an idea of what Venice still is, or to form a tolerably graphic guess as to what she has been, must visit her. . . . There is no other process by which the object can be attained.

I think it would be well if those persons, whose avocations render an absence of many months from home inconvenient, nay, almost impossible, were to act upon the incontrovertible principle that "half a loaf is better than no bread." If this were done, many a lawyer and many a divine, who now look with longing eyes towards Italy, but consider it as quite impossible to look *at her*, might find it a very easy matter to see Milan, Florence, Bologna, and Venice, within the limits of a long vacation, or a bishop's furlough, and would find themselves well rewarded for the exertion, even though Rome and Naples were still left unseen.

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The little expeditions on the lagunes, which take us out of Venice, but not beyond sight of her, are not among the least delightful of our recreations . . . and among them all there was none which has given me more pleasure than that which led us to the Armenian convent. . . . The whole expedition is full of interest. . . . The direction in which it lies gives, both in going and returning, a great variety of views, all exquisite in their peculiarity and local charm. We passed close under the walls of the isolated madhouse, which has recently given occasion to a sonnet which, for truth and originality, I held to be almost unequalled. . . . You will think that I have never put Mr. Milne's volumes out of my hand since I entered Venice ; but it is quite impossible to pass under the walls of this singularly well-placed retreat without recalling both the picture and the philosophy to be found in his lines. He says, and says with admirable truth and power —

“ Strong medicine enters by the ear and eye ;
That low unaltering dash against the wall
May lull the angriest dream to vacancy ;
And melancholy, finding nothing strange
For her poor self to jar upon at all,
Frees her sad-centred thoughts, and gives them
pleasant range.”

We unfortunately found the learned and highly-esteemed superior of the Armenian convent absent upon a distant excursion . . . and yet it is like ingratitude to express regret at it ; for nothing could

be more obliging and every way amiable than the manner in which every thing interesting was shown by the extremely intelligent young man who received us in his absence.

This convent seems to have been the scene of one of Lord Byron's fitful paroxysms of study. He set about acquiring the Armenian language with a zeal which evidently lasted till he had obtained some mastery over its difficulties; for, according to the report of our young cicerone, he translated very many volumes from Armenian into English. He appears also to have left a very amiable impression behind him by his industry, intelligence, and urbanity. . . . The Armenians appear affectionately proud of quoting his name, and evidently consider him as in some sort belonging to them.

This fine establishment, of which a large school makes part, received a portion of the splendid legacy which enabled the Armenians of Vienna to enlarge their premises in the Vorstaat there, and to exert that remarkable spirit of industry which every where seems to redeem Armenian monks from all suspicion of showing the drone-like idleness, which is generally attributed to religious recluses. Here, as at Vienna, printing is carried on in various languages, under the very learned and accurate superintendence of the fathers; and I have heard scholars speak highly of the accuracy of both these establishments.

In one of the rooms I was struck by catching

sight of a portrait, admirable at least for its likeness, of our much-esteemed and much-lamented acquaintance, Ahmid Fethi, who was resident at Venice, as ambassador from the Porte, during our visit there. This excellent person, who, I am told, has received the bow-string as a reward for years of truly patriotic service, and as a fitting punishment for having ventured to think with more good sense and intelligence than was judged to become a Turk, appears to be equally loved and honoured by the good Armenians here; and though he paid, as it is said, his life as the price of it, he did not die without achieving a greater reputation for moral worth and intellect than is recorded of any of his countrymen. His darling hope, and the great object of his existence, was the obtaining something deserving the name of education for his young countrymen. . . . His spirit must have been as much braver as his mind was more enlightened than those of his fellow-subjects . . . or he would never have ventured to make an attempt so pregnant with danger. . . . But I think not that the effort, or at any rate that the idea, will die with him. There is many a young Turk living yet who feels the benefit of the instruction obtained by his means; and this is a sort of *leven* very apt to reproduce itself.

Much of the pleasure of this excursion, and of the information obtained in the course of it, was due to our being accompanied by our very agreeable countryman, Mr. W——, who, from having been

long resident at Venice, knows every body and every thing, and, both here and every where else where he has accompanied us, has given us a *connaissance de choses*, that we should have greatly wanted without him.

It was in company with the same very delightful companion, that we mounted the campanile of St. Mark, and, by his assistance, were enabled to trace our way with greater distinctness than I had ever hoped to attain, through all the most important quarters of this intricate and mysterious old city. I have rarely been so fascinated by any view seen from a tower the bird's-eye style of examination producing something so much more like a plan than a picture, that I have never before received much pleasure from it. But here the case is different; it is not so much beauty as interest that is sought for; and this is not only found in abundance, but obtained with peculiar advantage by this comprehensive view. As the ascent is by an inclined plane, instead of steps, it is not in any way fatiguing, and should by no means be left out of the traveller's list of "things to be done and seen." This tower was one of those used by Galileo for his observations.

Another of our lagune excursions took us to the remote burying-ground of the Protestants on the Lido; and the consequences arising from it very nearly converted me into one of its tenants. . . . Immediately upon landing, we came upon a sort of

rustic restaurant for eating oysters. The tables laid in the shadow of that now precious rarity, a *tree*, induced some of us to sit down and eat. The oysters, though not particularly good, were at any rate particularly fresh, as the picturesque fisherman who was selling them was still dripping from the deep foot-bath which he had taken while procuring them. I took seven or eight of them, and was as nearly poisoned thereby as it was well possible to be, and yet live to tell of it. My friendly and skilful physician, Dr. Giacinto Nomias of St. Luke's, whose antidote prescriptions took effect within a few hours, told me that strangers can rarely eat the oysters of Venice, especially at this season, without danger. An English gentleman, General P——, died here about a twelvemonth ago from this cause.

* * * * *

I have been again disappointed by what I had heard spoken of as a chef d'œuvre of Tintoretto, in fact as his *finest* composition. It is on an enormous canvass in one of the five large rooms at the Scuola of St. Rocca, and represents the Crucifixion. It is undeniably a work of great power and expression; and my disappointment arose less from any defect in the work itself, than from comparing it with the never-to-be-forgotten altar-piece by the same master at Schleissheim. Perhaps the accident of light, which is arranged with peculiar felicity in the Bavarian chapel, may have done

much towards producing an effect which it is so impossible to forget. It is seldom, I think, that the great pictures of Tintoretto are seen to full advantage, from their being so enormously large as to make it difficult to light them completely, while, at the same time, they require to be so lighted more than those of many other masters. Tintoretto is said to have painted for thirty years in this institution of St. Rocca, and has left many interesting works there.

There are perhaps few things in Venice which give a greater idea of its past commercial wealth than this magnificent confraternity of merchants. . . . The lavish expenditure upon every part of the building is astonishing. The decorative carvings in wood of the magnificent great room ; the richness of the marbles ; the majestic proportions of the various apartments ; the almost unequalled staircase ; and, above all, the splendour of its numerous paintings, show clearly that nothing which wealth could bring was thought too precious for this establishment. . . . The church attached to the Scuola is almost equally magnificent, and possesses many treasures of art of very high reputation ; amongst others, a Christ dragged along by an executioner, by Titian, which struck us as peculiarly sublime. There is a copy of it in basso-relievo just by, which is not, I think, of equal merit.

We remarked, in the palazzo of the Scuola, a tablet bearing a Latin inscription, which appeared to

me (on being interpreted) sô Boccaccio-like in its strength of colouring the horrors of the plague, that I got it copied and inserted here.

“ Sæviebat pestifera lues, quâ nulla unquam vel diuternior, vel perniciosior extitit, nostrorum criminum ultrix. Passim urbe totâ cadavera jacere prostrata carbunculis, maculis, bubonibusque horrentibus obsessa. Iisdem ædibus eâdem horâ funera funeribus continuari. Ubique lachrymæ, suspiria, singultus. Ubique totius civitatis miserabilis aspectus, civibus repente vel obeuntibus, vel metu perterritis dulcem patriam deserentibus. Demum aliquando Deiparâ Virgine et Beatiss. Rocho deprecatoribus visa est hæc Erynnis adeo tristis ac dira extremo mense Xembris, cum Martio cœpisset crassari ac furere, vim fere omnem amisisse. Quo quidem temporis intervallo cum societatis cccc plus minus fratres intercidissent, iisdem ipsis fratribus præstantissimi viri D. Ferro magni societatis magistri, studium, diligentia, benignitas nunquam defuit. Qui quidem tantam cladem hoc ipso monumento testatam voluit; utque legens posteritas admiretur, ingentemque Venetorum multitudinem pestis crudelitate absumptam pientissimis lachrymis prosequatur.”

LETTER VI.

The Statements which represent Venice as falling into ruin erroneous, the present Government being careful to preserve it. — Unfortunate circumstances respecting the Foscari Palace. — Excessive Reserve of the small Remnant of the ancient Aristocracy. — Lord Byron not admitted to this set. — Attachment of the Venetians to ancient usage.

Venice, October, 1841.

THOUGH I am far from believing Venice to be actually at this moment in the state of mouldering tumble-down destruction, which I have more than once seen pathetically described, both in verse and prose, her condition, and the manner of her existence is certainly so completely changed as to render it very difficult to exaggerate the features of the violent political, social, and commercial revolution which she has undergone. As to its being necessary to set off post-haste, in order to behold this “*città d’oro*,” as Petrarch calls it, before it literally falls to pieces, and becomes hid under the waters of its canals, a piece of advice which I have read very gravely given by a very grave traveller, I feel strongly disposed to deny the fact. On the contrary, I have very little doubt that if the present order of things continues,

those who visit Venice a dozen years hence will find fewer traces of visible decay than those who visit it to-morrow. I am not quite sure, however, that I should therefore, and for that especial reason, prefer the later, although there may be other reasons for doing so, to the earlier visit. There is, in my estimation, no good cause to mourn over the political changes which have befallen this once rich and powerful, but greedy and tyrannical republic; no single volume that I have ever read concerning her greatness has left on my mind any impresson of her virtue, even in her very best days, or of her having ever exercised any favourable influence upon human happiness. That her splendour was more picturesque than that of any other people, I have no doubt. It is impossible to advance the length of a gondola upon the Grand Canal, without perceiving a beauty of general design in the magnificent buildings between which it flows, or without feeling assured that to obtain this was not merely the object of an individual, but of a powerful, rich, and (architecturally speaking) enlightened government. In a country where every individual, from the most noble to the least so, considered the acquirement of wealth by commerce as no blot upon their glory, — and in the days when Venice may have been said to

———— “reign,
Such mixture was not held a stain” —

in such a nation as is sure to grow up amidst general, abundant, and increasing wealth, it is reasonable to expect that the universal display of it must produce exactly such a throng of stately palaces as we see here ; and it is equally natural to expect that in a Roman Catholic country, where numerous incentives to the love of pleasure were led on by the possession of abounding gold, churches should be built, enriched, and beautified, to atone for the irregularities so produced. Add to this, the native sun-shine and the native art, together with the singularity of her local position, and the charm that still rests upon Venice may be easily accounted for and understood. As an eloquent and intelligible record, therefore, of the days that are gone, there may be more interest in looking at Venice before her general aspect is materially changed by the active spirit of preservation which is now at work within her than afterwards, and as far as this goes, it may be well to come with speed ; but as to the prophecy that I have somewhere read or heard, of the disappearance of the city from before the eyes of men, and its abandonment to the world of fishes, within the course of the next half century, I have no faith in it whatever.

Mournful, indeed, would be the feeling with which I should look at the matchless beauty of these liquid streets, did I believe they were in the very act of disappearing for ever ! But I

truly believe there is no more danger of this, than that Vienna herself should vanish, or Milan melt away in a snow-storm. As to the moanings and lamentations uttered over the violent political change that has passed over Venice, I see no good reason for them : her power, as a separate nation, was much too artificial and accidental, to endure under the present altered circumstances of Europe, which require much that Venice never had to ensure stability of political existence. . . . The extinction of what was once so gay and gorgeous, so vigorous and alert, would certainly offer a subject of very melancholy contemplation, if there were the slightest reason to believe that any single moral advantage were lost to mankind by the change. . . . But the contrary is too plainly evident, for any one but a poet to have imaginative daring enough to doubt it. Venice is not likely to be ever again the heart and the head of a great maritime empire ; but in all human probability she will again become a flourishing commercial city, and still remain a magnificent museum of art, and a favourite resort of the curious and intelligent of all countries and I think we may say to her, not as a threat, but as a very comfortable prediction, —

“ Se presso al matin del ver si sogna,
Tu sembrai, di qua da picciol tempo,
Di quel che *Austria*, non ch' altri, t' agogna.”

But though in no danger whatever of vanishing

bodily from the earth, the curiously visible traces of what Venice has been, looked at, beside the living evidence of what she is, produces a feeling somewhat resembling what I can imagine would be caused by seeing the chronicles of Froissart paraded before our eyes in the streets of Paris in a series of pantomimic processions. So much is altered, yet so much is still the same, that I perpetually feel as if I were looking at an exhibition, got up to amuse the company present, by showing how things used to be in days of yore. That great part of the charm of Venice consists in this, is very certain, and I heartily hope that means will be found to keep the beautiful old stones together, without letting the traces of the repairing process be too plainly visible. I never pass the palace of the Foscari without a sort of shudder as I think that it must either be pulled down; or speedily repaired, for accidents of all kinds — desertion, mortgages, legal uncertainties, and doubtful ownership, have cruelly conspired to make what is still the fairest, the frailest also, of Venetian palaces. I confess that I should consider it as no slight misfortune to reach Venice after this dark, majestic, richly-historic edifice had disappeared, or its aspect very greatly changed. The exterior is still so proudly beautiful that I cannot imagine there is any immediate danger of absolute destruction; but the interior is in so sad a condition, we are told, as to make it unsafe to enter,

lest timbers should fall upon your head. But if the stone-work of the stately edifice be still as substantial as it looks to be, a little prompt activity among these threatening timbers within might still preserve it. . . . And if there be such legal difficulties about the possession of the premises, as to make the entering upon them a matter of risk, it would be a very pious piece of tyrannical absolutism, if the Austrian government would order workmen to enter it, *coûte qui coûte*. . . . To do so great right, they might safely do a little wrong, and when the lovely relic was put in safe condition, the question as to whom it belonged to might be settled at leisure.

The most melancholy thing concerning Venice that I have heard since I have been here, is the singular condition of the noble families who still remain the owners of the same palaces, and in many instances of the same revenues too, as when their race were part and parcel of a power now lost and gone for ever.

“ Tu che spirando vai, veggendo i morti,
Vedi s' alcuna è grande come queste ! ”

Proud, reserved, and even to native Italians, nay, to their fellow-citizens, difficult of access, these noble ladies and gentlemen for the most part lead lives of profound retirement. . . . There are indeed, it is said, some among them who, chancing, perhaps, to come early into possession of their

revenues, have found this proud retreat intolerable ; and forsaking the gloomy and solitary grandeur of their old patrician mansions, they have been tempted to make their residence in some of the gay apartments of St. Mark's Place, and issuing thence whenever pleasure called, have not scrupled to form familiar associations with persons who cannot show a single portrait of an ancestral doge, or even prove that any great-great-grandsire ever sat as one of the Council of Ten. . . . But these too easily pleased individuals are, of course, considered as a degenerate race, and there is not one of them but would find it difficult to obtain a bride from among the sturdier remnant of the aristocracy. In many instances of course, this high-blooded spirit remains in full force where unhappily loss of property has followed loss of station ; and where this happens, the condition of the race is most profoundly sad retaining nothing, it may be, of the solid material of worldly greatness, except the venerable chapel that has received for ages the honoured dust of the family a few old portraits, and the empty echoing halls, which now themselves seem fitter for a mausoleum than for any other purpose. There is a great deal of sadness in this ; and I could not help thinking when I heard it, that those who are said to be unfortunate, because they are before the age in which they live, are less to be pitied than those who, like the Venetian nobles, are behind it.

I was assured that in no part of the world was it so difficult for strangers to get into society, as at Venice, and that, in the case of foreigners, it was little less than impossible. I quoted Lord Byron as an exception, but was most positively told in return that I was mistaken in supposing this to be the case : —

“ Lord Byron,” said my informant, “ was for a considerable time in Venice, was accompanied thither by an Italian lady and her brother, who were previously known to several wealthy and noble families resident in Venice. . . . His own great reputation made him the subject of the most lively curiosity, let him go where he would ; and from all these causes together he became the familiar associate of a sufficient number of persons to constitute what might fairly be called at Venice a large circle of society. But Lord Byron *never* was admitted to that small select knot of Venetian aristocracy, which holds itself precious, apart, and unapproachable ; and which is, in truth, both too proud and too melancholy to admit the approach of any curious wanderers whatever, whether beauty, poet, lady, or lord. . . . The case of Lord Byron, therefore, instead of an exception, was a strong confirmation of what I have stated.”

These are, as nearly as I can recal them, the words in which this statement was made. . . . But whatever inaccuracy the not writing them down at the moment may have produced is

merely verbal ; in the statement of facts I have made no blunder, and am the more certain of my accuracy, from having listened with the wide-awake attention produced by hearing intelligence that was unexpected.

This extremity of reserve in the class of which I have been speaking shows clearly enough, without requiring the aid of any commentary, that the present order of things at Venice is felt to be galling and distasteful by those who feel more inclined to cherish the memory of times past than to enjoy the advantages of time present. But I truly believe that it is this small class alone who feel any disposition to quarrel with the Austrian possession of the country. I have never omitted an opportunity of obtaining information on this point, and with this exception the result has uniformly shown that the Venetians are well satisfied with the conduct of their rulers, and sanguine in their hopes and expectations of a revival of commercial prosperity. Trieste is always mentioned as their great rival ; but in spite of this, they say cheerily that every movement of industry is encouraged, and that a visibly increasing prosperity is the result.

It is certain, nevertheless, that had Venice never suffered the degradation and misery which fell upon her, during what may be called her *transition state*, she might be less sensible than she at present appears to be of the advantages of a

steady government that feels an enduring, and, as they hope, an increasing interest in her prosperity. . . . for without this, there can be little doubt but that the youngest of her gondolieri would feel as little liking to the new dynasty as the oldest of her nobles. Not, indeed, that there is one of them likely to blunder so egregiously as did the noble poet who mourns so pathetically over the termination of her thirteen hundred years of *freedom*. I have never yet heard any Italian, either in or out of Venice, who ventured to speak of the Venetian government in the days of her self-sustaining strength, but as one of the sharpest systems of tyranny that was ever established upon earth; and I believe it is necessary to go quite as far as across the Atlantic, in order to find any one (except, indeed, the dear little gamins of Paris) who still fancy that the name of a republic suffices to ensure personal liberty. It is not, therefore, the memory of any real or fancied emancipation from authority, that makes the Venetian of the present day speak with love and affection of a state of things which was over long before he was born; but it is the innate averseness to change and innovation of all kinds, which makes them now (even the very lowest orders) look back with pride and affection to the boasted duration of their republic, and not any blundering notion of freedom conferred by it on their ancestral citizens. This popular and universal clinging to old customs, habits, and asso-

ciations, may be easily traced throughout the whole machinery of Venetian society. They do not talk here, as elsewhere, of doing this or that because "it is the fashion" they do every thing because "it is the custom of Venice" and, beyond all question, a great portion of the almost mysterious charm which seems to hang upon every thing we look at here, arises from the *intact* antiquity which has been permitted for ages to rest upon it.

One instance, among a thousand others, of this clinging to what they have long possessed, instead of welcoming, as almost all other people do, whatever is new, may be seen in the universal pertinacity with which they avoid the garden which was cleverly constructed for them by the French, and continue to walk for ever, and for ever, and for ever, in the Piazza di San Marco. Though the construction of this garden may fairly be called clever, as in truth the formation of it, considering the nature of the ground, was a tour de force, I do not mean to vaunt its beauty, it being certainly as triste a mixture of stunted trees, loose gravel, and brown grass as can be found any where: nevertheless trees and grass, when found in the midst of the sea, would probably be accounted very precious acquisitions any where except at Venice; but being an innovation and a novelty, it is avoided here with evident dislike, and the pavement of St. Mark's Place, with its ages of venerable usage

to endear it, is still, and ever will be, the only promenade in the world in which Venetians can delight.

When inquiring concerning the celebrated Carnival, I was told with a very melancholy air that it was no longer so gay as formerly. "And why not?" said I, fully expecting to hear in return some little grumbling reflection on the severity of the Austrian rule, which prevented them, in some manner or other, from amusing themselves as they wished. I could hardly, however, have been more completely mistaken. I was told in reply that there was no longer the same zest, the same enjoyment and gaiety during the Carnival, because there being no longer the same restrictive severity of government during the rest of the year, the interval which was formerly enjoyed with such exceeding relish, had in a great degree lost its value that the rich and the poor too might now go where they liked and do what they liked, any day and every day and so the people no longer cared much about it.

LETTER VII.

Chapel of the Carmilitari. — The Stillness of Venetian Streets. — Night and Day. — Serenades. — Romantic Anecdote. — Impossibility of hanging a Criminal in Venice. — A Murderer shot there, because no Hangman could be found.

Venice, October, 1841.

THERE is one little church at Venice which I must mention, despite my recorded resolution not to indulge myself in dilating upon similar subjects; and I make the exception, not because there is any peculiarly distinguished work of art within it, but rather, on the contrary, lest, from there being nothing of the kind of sufficient reputation to attract you, it might be left unseen, if you should chance to visit Venice *à la hâte*. . . . This, in my opinion, would be a real loss, for I believe it to be perfectly unique, and, moreover, exceedingly well worth seeing. The church, or rather chapel of the Carmilitari is a matchless museum of the very rarest and most beautiful marbles, and I think it is impossible for any one who has not seen it to form an idea of the degree of splendour which this species of decoration, with none other to help it, can produce. This very remarkable little edifice is the joint property of seven of the noblest families

of Venice ; and six of them are still existing. Each one has a separate chapel in it, beneath which lie the ashes of his race ; while monuments, which seem by general agreement between the noble confraternity to be so arranged as to produce the best effect for the whole edifice, rise above them each has its own peculiar style, and each its favourite prevailing tint, either of verde, giallo, nero, or rosso antico, mingled with all that is most precious in jasper, porphyry, serpentine, &c. It is a perfect casket of marble trinkets, and, in good guide-book style, *mérite d'être vu*, both for its beauty and singularity.

But with all my wish to be guide-bookish and useful, there is no need to tell you, that if ever you should come to Venice, you must find out for yourself about ten thousand sights and wonders that I have not ventured to attempt mentioning, having before my eyes a bonâ fide dread of making you fall asleep, instead of rousing you, as I would wish to do, into sufficient energy to make you set off and look at them all yourself Say not therefore, from these my meagre hints, that I am unmindful, indifferent, or ungrateful, for all the pleasure Venice has given me On the contrary, I am quite sure that as long as I remember any thing, I shall not forget one single day, or hour, that I have passed here But the deepest impression of all, perhaps, has been made by the trifling circumstance of doing and seeing

every thing without noise. After a good deal of travelling in search of sights, one gets a habit of preparing oneself for noise and tumult at the gates of every city ; and the finding the stillness of night amidst the splendour of day produces a sort of wonder from which I have not yet recovered. I have, moreover, two sources of gratification here, not only distinct, but in absolute contrast to each other. The one consists in seeking with industrious avidity for the pictures, the statues, the reliefs, the architecture, and the antiquities of Venice ; and the other in avoiding every species of research and abandoning myself in delicious idleness to the gentle movement of our gondola, floating here, and floating there, without any other end or object than the enjoyment of that waking dream of beauty which, go in what direction we will, can never fail. The best hour perhaps for this last species of delight is when the moon rides triumphant, and in all the fullness of her meridian glory over the towers and domes, the bridges, the palaces, and the dark waters of Venice. I might perhaps name also my much-loved "hour of prime," were it not that I have a sort of doubt on my mind, whether the very city itself does not at that forbidden hour shrink from sight, and go to sleep beneath the waters. The stillness of death is in truth not more perfect than that of Venice, during the period that is usually called morning, in other parts of the world. It is in fact the only night they have, and

they take the liberty of enjoying it, from the highest class to the lowest, without paying the slightest attention to any thing the clock or the sun can say against it. It is absolutely necessary therefore, in order to be fit for living here, that you should learn to lay in bed till about mid-day Elsewhere, such conformity with the sleeping and waking peculiarities of your neighbours is unnecessary but here, non-conformity is positive death in the midst of life It is delightful, I "say for I know," "to meet the sun upon the upland lawn," even though you meet him alone ; but the upland lawn, with its trees, and its birds, its flowers, and its fragrance, is a very different thing from Venice, where all life seems extinct within her Were it possible (which it is not) to look at her in this state of suspended animation, under the twilight of the stars, there would be something sublime perhaps in the dark loneliness. . . . But there is no resemblance between this and the effect of Venice in the broad hot light of the full garish day, while still there is no object visible that does not look like the relics of the past night. In no place indeed does the sight and sound of human beings in life and motion embellish so much, and annoy so little. Even after the weaker portion of the gay throng has yielded to fatigue, and retreated at two or three o'clock in the morning within the delicate shelter of the mosquito net, the serenade begins that still darling

delight of the gay Signori and the blooming beauties of Venice *Once* more let me quote Mr. Milne in confirmation —

“ When along the light ripple the far serenade
Has accosted the ear of each passionate maid,
She may open the window that looks on the stream,
She may smile on her pillow, and blend it in dream ;
Half in words, half in music, it pierces the gloom,
‘ I am coming . . . Italè. . . . but you know not for whom !’

“ Now the tones become clearer, you hear more and more
How the water divided returns to the oar ;
Does the prow of the gondola strike on the stair ?
Do the voices and instruments pause, and prepare ?
Oh ! they faint on the ear, as the lamp on the view,
‘ I am passing Premi but I stay not for you.’ ”

In short, we may very nearly say here, “ ‘Tis only daylight that makes ”—*rest* and the hour of prime here means, in reference to that of leaving your pillow about three o’clock in the afternoon.

While sitting with our coffee and ices the other evening before Florian’s coffee-house, in company with our agreeable English friend Mr. W., he told us a story which he said was just now muttered about in every gondola, and upon every bridge in Venice and which gives reason to believe that the days of intrigue and violence are not over here. The act recorded is indeed one of which the great romance of human life has already furnished more than one example, but there is a variety in the *costume* that gives something of novelty to it

It seems that a few days ago the most celebrated sage femme in the city was awakened from her first nap, and while every canal still looked as black as the gondola it bore, was startled by the entrance of two men into her bed-room, which was always left open from the probability that urgent messages, which could not wait for mid-day, might be sent to her. These persons, who were both masked, awoke the good lady as gently as might be, and gave her to understand their errand, which was quite in the usual line of her business, excepting that she was required to submit herself to the ceremony of being conveyed blindfold. Perhaps it might not have been the first time that this was required of her. . . . At any rate she made no objection, but quietly submitting herself to their will, was led, with her eyes very perfectly enveloped, into the gondola that waited for her at the stair of the house. After a row of pretty considerable length, she was led with all possible caution and mystification up so many stairs that she got tired of counting them, but which brought her at length to an apartment where, the blinding apparatus being removed from her eyes, she perceived a stately bed, together with all the appendages of wealth that could be conveniently found in a bed-room, but totally without attendants with the exception of a tall figure of a man wrapped in a large cloak, and closely masked, who stood like a sable ghost at the foot of the bed.

"There lies your patient!" he said in a muffled sort of voice, and pointing to the bed.

The poor sage femme trembled. . . . She began to fear that something worse than mere concealment might be intended, and while preparing to obey the mandate she had received, she determined to examine closely the features of her unfortunate patient for having passed her whole life in Venice, and from her long professional services in families of the highest rank, she thought it not impossible but she might recognise, and by that means befriend the lady who so evidently was in the power of the mysterious and gloomy cavalier. But what was her astonishment on drawing near the bed, and opening the curtains, to perceive, instead of the young female face she had expected, that of an extremely handsome young man, with magnificent *favoris* and *imperiale*, and a pair of moustaches that might have well become a trooper! Surprised and terrified, she started back, believing that for some unaccountable reason or other, she had been betrayed into the haunt of a set of lawless men, who intended to murder her; and falling on her knees, she implored that they would spare her life.

The figure in the cloak then came forward, and in a well-sustained falsetto told her with as much gentleness as it seemed in his nature to assume, that neither her life nor her safety would be in any degree endangered if she properly went through the duty she was sent for to perform, but that if she

persevered in showing such unnecessary alarm, her voice should be immediately silenced in a way that might make her repent her folly. The finale of the story might do as the foundation of a novel. . . . A child was born . . . and the instant its voice was heard, the masqued cavalier held out his arms to receive it. The poor woman hesitated, and for an instant refused to obey the command implied by his attitude ; upon which, passion seemed to get the better of prudence, and in a voice which she thought she might know again if ever it should meet her ear, he told her to beware of bringing upon herself a fate, intended only for the worthless thing she held. Confirmed in her worst fears by these dreadful words, the poor woman threw herself suddenly at his feet, holding the threatened babe to her bosom, and offering to take charge of the child for ever if its life might be spared, observing that the utter impossibility of her ever knowing where she had been, or to whom the child belonged, must prevent any possibility of evil consequences arising from such an act of mercy.

The resolution of the gentleman was taken in a moment. "Be it so!" he exclaimed. . . . "Take the little wretch with you, but take also the assurance that the very slightest effort towards making any inquiry concerning it will be followed by immediate destruction . . . both to the child and to you." He then placed a heavy bag of money in her hands, assisted her in wrapping the

cloak she had thrown aside on entering, around the infant and herself, and then opening the door, gave her into the charge of the two men who had brought her, and who were waiting outside with the blinding apparatus ready to throw over her. She submitted to this, without any word or movement of resistance, and was safely restored to her home with her little charge.

The story is altogether a strange one, and whether true or false, or, as is most probable, partly the one and partly the other, I have no means of knowing. The lively relator of it laughed so heartily at the poor woman's dismay at encountering what seemed the head of a gentleman, instead of that of a lady, that I charged him with having invented it as *un mot pour rire*, but he then so gravely assured me that the story was in very general circulation as true, that I could not but believe him.

While discussing the Italian propensity to violence which so many narratives seem to certify, our friend told us that whatever might have been the case in Venice formerly, he did not believe that assassination was frequent now ; and as a proof of the infrequency of any crime demanding capital punishment, he told us that there was no individual to be found throughout the city, who would consent to perform the office of a hangman. Since we have been here, an execution for a very aggravated case of murder that of a brother for a trifling sum of money has taken place but the

culprit was shot, because no one could be found to hang him.

* * * * *

I cannot bear to think that this is probably my last letter from Venice. But alas! three weeks are gone and over since we arrived . . . and it is *time* to go! Adieu!

LETTER VIII.

Departure from Venice. — The Villas on the Brenta. — Vicenza. — The Olympic Theatre of Palladio. — Verona. — The Amphitheatre. — Tombs of the Scaligers. — Mantua. — The Cartoons. — Giulio Romano. — Antique Marbles in the Museum. — Handsome Cathedral. — Bologna. — Gallery revisited. — Crossing the Po. — Modena. — Anecdote.

Vicenza, October, 1841.

WE have indeed bidden farewell to Venice! and the feeling that it is rather more than possible I may see it no more, renders it a pain to remember it.

Our last evening there was spent in watching the effects of a half-full moon upon the piazza of St. Mark upon the towering Rialto upon the smooth surface of the great canal, and upon Palladio's columns and domes reflected from its surface All this was sad enough, because it was for the last time! Yet even under the influence of this feeling, and it really was very strong upon me, I could not even then have made up my mind to remain there for ever It is too, too unlike all other former dwellings; and, though even this strangeness has a charm, and though moreover its own real loveliness is almost

greater than language can describe, I still feel that to decide upon living there, would be very like taking up one's abode with Undine ; I wonder what the pigeons of St. Mark would think of it, if they were suddenly transported amidst fields and groves ? Oh ! they would not like it at all neither should I like, and very much for the same reasons, to turn away my eyes for ever, and for ever, from the green joys of terra firma, for the sake of enjoying the watery brightness of Venice. . . . Think not, however, from this, that the delight I have found there was less than I expected ; on the contrary, it was *decidedly greater*. I have no idea that it is possible any body should feel disappointed at Venice, for I have no idea that any one could imagine one half of its charm, before they have seen it, and (forgive the bull) listened to its delicious stillness. . . . I shall not easily forget the last few moments that I passed there if there were some word that could express the same idea as picturesque, only multiplied into itself, I would use it to describe the scene. A distinguished Austrian officer of our acquaintance had continued the promenade in St. Mark's Place with the gentlemen of our party, long after we ladies had retired for our short night's rest for we purposed setting off at five in the morning. But they, in true Venetian style, continued the talk and the walk, till it was nearly time for us to go, and then they all came to our lodgings together the

Venetian resident not having in the least the air of having done any thing unusual, but merely as coming to say adieu to us at the moment of our departure. When that moment came, there was no longer any moon to light us across the lagune, but the stars were bright as stars could be, and when we were passing by the long dark passage which led from the bottom of our staircase to the steps leading to the great canal, the pretty, gentle, kind-hearted daughter of our landlady, with whom I had formed a considerable intimacy during my illness (in which she had attended me most assiduously) came forward to assist us with a lantern. The obliging padrona herself appeared with another, while a second pretty daughter followed, and thus escorted we reached the steps, and prepared to enter the boat. But for a minute or two I found it impossible to pass the dark-browed gate, the scene beyond it was so intensely beautiful. No wonder the Venetians sit up all night in no other place on earth can darkness, or the near approach to it, be so enchanting. Besides, star-light in Italy is very far from being as near darkness as it is elsewhere ; and as I stood looking through the frame formed by the door-way leading to the canal, the fine palace of the Foscari, its noble elevation plainly visible, and nothing hid but its sad dilapidation, rose majestically at one point ; while in the opposite direction lowered the grim Rialto, so redolent of Shylock and the Moor.

. . . . Between the two, and nearly opposite to the spot where we stood, stretched the grand front of the Pisani* palace, while between them and us flowed the dark waters of the broad canal so mournfully majestic in its own historic interest so precious to our eyes as looked upon for the last time ! But this pleasure might not last ! the luggage was all arranged our two boatmen stood ready to waft us away, and the kind souls we were to leave stood ready also to pronounce their last farewell. I believe I entered first, for I well remember that for some minutes I was indulged with the contemplation of another picture. The group standing under the doorway, their lanterns shedding a dim and partial light, became, in its way, quite as picturesque as what I had been gazing at before. The dark, dark shadows on the water immediately under the building, the boatmen, the party entering, and the party left were all pictures. . . . And then we moved away, and a kind "addio !" uttered in chorus followed us. . . . It may be very true that Venice would not prove the best place to live in yet it is true also that it is a sad place to leave !

How much of the oddly-mysterious charm, which somewhat beyond reason perhaps still hangs about

* A grand picture by Paul Veronese, splendid in its elaborate finishing, and perhaps unequalled in preservation, is to be seen in this palace. The subject is the family of Darius at the feet of Alexander.

this "ocean queen," may disappear when the railroad that is about to link her to terra firma is completed, it may not be easy to prophesy but I must confess that I think she owes much of her perfection as a picture to her having remained so perfectly untouched by the hand of modern improvement. I know of no other spot that we can go to, with equal certainty of not being brought back to the prose of the passing moment, by seeing something that was done yesterday. At Tintern Abbey the grass has been just mown, and at Heidelberg its guardian's rooms have just been made comfortable. . . . But at Venice it is easy enough to fancy, that all which belonged to the mighty dead who have slept for centuries has been left untouched for our inspection. . . . Those who have been mourning over the decay of Venice, however, are likely to be satisfied by the prospects of improving commerce and increasing wealth which are opening before her and I am quite ready to confess that she deserves something better than to be kept as an antiquated toy, for the amusement of travelling ladies and gentlemen, in the rococo line of research.

* * * * *

But if not disappointed by Venice herself, I have been, and that most deplorably, by her "splendid villas on the banks of the lovely Brenta." . . . Many is the canal that I have seen, navigated by coal-barges, incomparably superior, in every feature

which constitutes the beauty of landscape, to this miserable little river. For even supposing that its stream, like that of other Italian rivers, may be less copious than in days of yore (of which, by the way, there is not the slightest appearance), even then it could never, from the nature and formation of its banks, have been otherwise than ugly the level on both sides being unvarying as far as the eye can reach ; and as for the villas, which are in many cases built below the level of the stream, and protected from it by a most hideous embankment, they are always very close upon it, and always parallel to it the high road passing between the “enchanted villa” and the “fair Brenta” being the well beaten dusty route from Padua to Venice. I can, perhaps, conceive it possible that these disagreeable abodes may have had charms in the eyes of those who, for the greater part of the year, never beheld a grass-plot, a tree, or even a flower, growing in its natural state ; but how they can ever have been admired by any who were not of an amphibious race, I know not. We went over the vice-regal palace, the front of which, by Palladio, is very handsome but neither its long galleries, innumerable rooms, nor flat garden, appeared to me to possess any feature deserving the epithet of *beautiful*. •

Our Rome-ward route must take us again to Bologna, but we have made a *détour* of many miles for the purpose of looking at this fair city of *Vicenza*,

from respect to Palladio ; at Verona we shall pause awhile as a compliment to Juliet and the Two Gentlemen ; and at Mantua, from civility to Virgil. This Vicenza is not only the birthplace of the great man whom I have lately learned so heartily to admire, but is moreover filled with his works, which are in sufficient number to give an air of dignity to the town, which, without them, would not have much to boast of. His classic toy, the pretty Olympic theatre, is exceedingly well worth a few hours' delay to look at and examine. The close similarity of its arrangements to those antique vestiges discovered at Pompeii, so many years after it was erected, is a curious evidence of the clear-headedness of Palladio, and proves, too, that a scholar does not study in vain, when seeking to find out how men arranged all sorts of things two thousand years ago.

I suppose it would be idle to doubt that in sober truth we manage these matters better than the old Grecians did with the scenery of Paris and London in our memory, it would be very bold to express any thing like a doubt on the subject. Nevertheless, I cannot help fancying that a play, of which the action was as simple as those of the Greek models, would be acted with prodigiously good effect here. Nor is it only the trick of the well-managed edifice on the stage which I admired ; the general form and arrangement of this little model theatre is charming. The portion of the building allotted to the audience is the half of

a long-oval divided lengthways, and is occupied round its whole extent by open seats, rising from the orchestra to the top of the building. Near this top, and following the form of this long oval, is a line of fine columns, each one supporting a statue, which produces an airy and very graceful effect. The space left for the orchestra is much below the stage, which rises beyond it into a noble proscenium, of great height and depth, in proportion to the size of the theatre, its width being the entire length of the oval. Beyond this proscenium the stage represents the streets of a Grecian city, with its colonnades, statues, fountains, and so forth. In the centre the principal street retires in beautiful perspective to a great distance, and lesser streets branch off on either side, all displaying, with excellent management, glimpses of the same graceful style of building, and so contrived as to permit the audience to perceive persons walking amongst them these persons, by the by, must, I presume, have been represented by children dressed as men, or the perspective effect would have been destroyed. I confess that this relieve mode of producing scenery approaches a little to Dean Swift's plan of conversing by means of *things* instead of *words*, but yet I should greatly like to see Palladio's theatre lighted up as skilfully as it is built, and one of Alfieri's plays acted upon it. The stage beyond the proscenium rises at a rapid angle, which produces an exceedingly happy and delusive effect from the

benches. Plays translated from the Greek have been repeatedly performed here, but not of late years. . . . The curious and interesting structure, however, seems to be kept very carefully in repair.

Verona, October, 1841.

I ALMOST lament having seen the stupendous Roman amphitheatre here. . . . The learned may talk of the mischief done by reparation, and of the horrible profanation of the little arena enclosed at one end of it, for the use of Punch, or some other equally dignified performer. It is all very true, I dare say particularly the appeal against Punch, who certainly might as well be desired to enact his tragedies elsewhere. . . . It is painful to have the sublimity of gladiatorial agonies mixed up with those of Joan. . . . But the immensity of this wonderful structure is such, that the pigmy preparations for these unclassic doings become literally almost invisible from the more distant part of it, and may very easily be forgotten, if people will only mind what they are about, and look at the grandiose sublimity of the whole, instead of breaking their heads against this little trumpery deformity at one end. If it had not been pointed out to me, I almost doubt if I should have remarked these pigmy preparations.

I am half angry with myself, I think, for being

so greatly struck with the grandeur of this unholy edifice. I am less "an antique Roman" than most people, having very little respect for their greatness, which neither in its origin or end appears to me of the best quality. But I felt it impossible, as I stood in this boldly-conceived theatre, to deny that their brutal joys must have had as much sublimity thrown around them as genius and power could bestow. . . . Why is it that with all the accumulated science of so many ages to help us, we can no longer rear such works as this? So beautiful in its grand simplicity, and at the same time so completely fulfilling the purpose for which it was planned, that the grace and the dignity seem to have grown out of it as if by accident. . . . Fitness of form seems to constitute beauty in the same manner that ease of movement constitutes grace. In both cases a sort of instinctive common-sense tells us that it is right. . . . the mind is satisfied, and the spirit pleased. . . . It is a pity that what seems so simple, while acknowledged to be so admirable, should ever be departed from. . . . The object being to accommodate thirty thousand persons in the best manner possible, for the purpose of their all having a perfectly commodious view of what was doing in the arena, it is impossible to imagine any other mode or manner in which it could be done so well. So gracious in the form, so majestic the proportions of these bare rough elements

of a building, that all the glories of Palladio, which I had so lately been gazing at with delight, seemed little better than so much Dresden china, by comparison with them.

I looked, and looked, till I began to quarrel with all human improvement, and the nineteenth century was rapidly descending to a discount in my imagination, when I happened to fix my eyes upon sundry openings, which were evidently not intended either for the entrances or the vomitories of the thirty thousand spectators. . . . "What were those apertures for?" said I. . . . "Those were for letting in the wild beasts upon the gladiators," was the reply. It is wonderful how suddenly the ideas suggested by this answer disenchanted me; but five minutes before I had been amusing myself by picturing thousands of such lovely women as I have been looking at for the last six or seven months scattered through the wide-spreading ranks of this magnificent enclosure . . . and now, the idea of what they would have come to look upon followed, and tolerably well reconciled me to the changes which had taken place among us. We no longer want a theatre to accommodate thirty thousand spectators. . . . The intellect of a Siddons or a Modena could not avail them; and we take joy no longer in watching the death-struggle of a man gasping in the embrace of a tiger. . . . All this is extremely satisfactory . . . but yet it offers no good reason either, why, when

we wish to rear a noble edifice, we should produce such a thing as that in Trafalgar Square . . . and then call it Greek too!

From the amphitheatre, we went to visit the tombs of the Scaligers, and very magnificent tombs they are. Excepting the proud monument of Maximilian at Inspruck, I have never seen any so splendid as that of Can Signorius, the last, and, we will hope, the worst of the Scaliger race, for he murdered his elder brother Can (Grande Secondo) before he (the murderer) was quite twenty years old . . . and then, having so acquired supreme power at Verona, caused this stupendous monument to be erected in his own honor, and himself composed the following modest epitaph:—

“ Scaliger hac nitida cubo Can Signorius arca,
 Urbibus optatus latis sine fine monarcha ;
 Ille ego sum, gemina qui gentis sceptrâ tenebam,
 Justitiâque meos mixta pietate regebam ;
 Inclyta cui virtus, cui pax tranquilla, fidesque
 Inconcussa, dabunt famam per sæcla diesque.”

The *Catalogue Raisonné* of the Scaliger tombs, given or sold by the guardian of them, and M. Valery also, states that Can Francis was the prince who received Dante during his exile; but Ugo Foscoli, whose accurate researches on every thing respecting Dante make him worthy of all belief, says *positively* that it was not Can Francis, but Bartolommeo, the eldest son of Albert the First, who enjoyed this honour . . . and it was not of

Alboino, with whom he was never on very good terms, but of his father Albert, that Dante speaks, when, alluding to the rank of Imperial Vicar, which had been granted to the reigning Scaliger, he says

“ In sulla Scala, posto il santo uccello.”

Nevertheless it seems pretty clear that Dante returned a second time to Verona in the reign of Can Francesco *il Grande* The eagle however certainly appears upon the ladder on the tomb of Alboino, but it is probable that he succeeded to the rank of his father The whole of this closely-packed collection of tombs is exceedingly interesting.

As to the tomb of Juliet, it is a stone, the history of which is so apocryphal that with the strongest desire to believe that in seeing it you look upon the coffin in which she lay, it is difficult to do so. By far the most interesting circumstance connected with this rude sarcophagus, is the interest it inspires in people of all nations, and of all degrees. The cidevant *Imperial* Archduchess of Parma has, *on dit*, a necklace formed of a portion of the red stone of which it is made and the most distinguished ladies of Verona wear a model of the sarcophagus as a trinket. There is a sort of universal fame in this, trivial as is the manner in which it is shown, that was pleasing to the devout Shaksperians of the party. Verona is a large and rather an imposing

city in appearance, and the day has evidently been when it was of considerably greater importance than at present.

Mantua.

Of course it is very satisfactory to find ourselves in the birth-place of Virgil; but excepting this, I know not that we have received any particular gratification from the visit. That

“Honoured flood,
Smooth sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds,”

slides still; indeed Mantua is on all sides so surrounded by water, that it makes one feel aguish to look on it and though “vocal no more,” there are certainly reeds still abounding there of such gigantic growth that they might answer the wishes of Polypheme.

The tapestry in the palace, worked after the designs of Raffael, were interesting to us, as English people in lawful national possession of the cartoons; and the learned valet de place failed not to inform us that the original drawings were in possession of *la grande Bretagna*, which remark he conveyed with a bow, and an air of making an agreeable compliment.

I believe it is quite my own fault that I could not contrive to feel more interest in walking about the streets of this old town. I do however feel a

great deal of true reverence for Giulio Romano, and walked through the palace eagerly looking out for cielings and walls covered by the works of his pencil; but though many such are there, they seemed to me, for the most part, to be in very bad condition, and far from rendering the palace deserving of what the Duke his patron said of it namely, that it was more belonging to Giulio Romano than to himself. I have been disappointed by not seeing the great room called the Appartamento de Troja, which from the outside looks like a bit of the doge's palace; but we were told that it was too desperately cracked in several places to make it safe to enter it. The Museum, or Academy as I believe it is called, has a very interesting collection of antique statues and busts, stolen, as it is said, by a Gonzago of yore, during the sack of Rome, while serving under Charles the Fifth. The cathedral is very handsome.

Bologna.

Here we are returned again to our old quarters in this interesting city and glad enough, I promise you, to have it in our power to revisit the picture gallery. Titian has not spoilt us Domenichino, Guido, and Guercino, looked as much alive as when we saw them last and as for the saint of saints! there can be of course but one St. Cecilia in Heaven, and all people who

go to Bologna declare that there is but one St. Cecilia on earth.

As an *avis au lecteur*, which may by possibility be useful, I will tell you to beware of the river Po at this season of the year. *After* we had crossed it, we were told that the passage ought never to be attempted after the 22d of October. . . . We crossed a day or two later than this ; and though we succeeded at last in making good our landing, it was not achieved without considerable difficulty, as it was neither more nor less than an absolute bog which received us, which the rain we had had since leaving Venice had rendered very nearly impassable. Two or three hours later we were told that the passage became quite impracticable, for the wind rose, and the rain fell with a great deal of Italian violence ; a species of rough weather considerably more alarming, I assure you, than any to which we are accustomed at home.

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We have ventured to pass through Modena, notwithstanding the notorious danger of being taken prisoners. Nay, we were bolder still ; for we actually ventured to remain there for an hour or two. But the gentlemen of our party were very punctiliously *shaved*, and that gave us confidence. . . . The palace, which is the only thing to be seen, is as much out of proportion to the rest of the town, as the lordly power of its prince to the size of his domain. I really can give you no

reason whatever for our not having given ourselves the trouble to visit it. . . . Perhaps in our very heart of hearts we were all secretly afraid of being thrown into the dungeons which are beyond all question somewhere or other, in the palace or out of it, within the walls of the metropolis of Modena. . . . But I assure you, if this were so, we were too high-minded to confess the feeling to each other, for not a word of the kind was spoken among us. In truth we all knew that Modena was a very ticklish territory to stand upon ; and I had very recently heard an anecdote that naturally recurred to my mind, together with the disagreeable conviction that should a similar adventure befall us, we might not escape so well as did the hero of it.

At the time of the last political movement in Italy, when Parma, and several places in the ecclesiastical states, showed an inclination to rise, Modena too had her patriots, though the little dukedom was still in appearance perfectly quiet. Amongst these was a gentleman who had the imprudence either to say, or to write, something on the subject which reached the ears of the sovereign, and struck him as being in its nature very little less objectionable than whiskers and a beard ; whereupon he availed himself of the privilege which his absolutism afforded him, and ordered the offending gentleman to be put in prison. Meanwhile the movement increased. The sovereign of Parma was as roughly treated as words could treat her, and Bologna was

in arms. The vicinity of such a state of things very naturally alarmed his highness of Modena, and orders were publicly given that the offences of the above-mentioned state prisoner should be punished by death.

Whether guilty or innocent, this state prisoner had many friends; but they dared not even converse together respecting him, so vigilant was the watch which at that critical moment was kept upon every subject of Modena. On the day previous to that fixed on for the execution of the offender, the observant agents of the police remarked that a gentleman who had just taken a letter from the post-office appeared in great agitation after its perusal; and that he conversed with several persons who gathered round him in whispers, and with every appearance both of having received important news, and being desirous of keeping it secret from all but his own particular friends. Of course it became the duty of this official personage to interfere; which he accordingly did, by addressing the gentleman and courteously demanding of him whence his letter came and what were its contents. The gentleman replied that it was quite impossible he could communicate them.

Within an hour he was arrested, and so great was the importance of every circumstance at this time, that the Duke presided at the examination which followed in person. The letter was now authoritatively demanded, and resistance, of course,

being out of the question, it was given up, and read aloud by command of the sovereign. Signature it had none ; but it was dated Bologna, and intimated that the news of the late arrest at Modena had produced a great effect in that city that the insurgents were in all directions getting under arms, and that their purpose was openly declared to be a visit to the palace of Modena, an attack upon the Duke and his family, who were all to be made prisoners, if their lives were spared, and an entry into the prison, in order to release the condemned captive. The letter concluded by conjuring the person to whom it was addressed not to risk his safety by remaining where scenes so terrible were about to be acted ; and a postscript was added, stating that an immense body of the insurgents were already on the march for Modena.

The agitation produced by such news as this may easily be imagined ; a very few words in the way of question and answer showed that the terrified receiver of the letter which bore them fully sympathised with the feelings expressed by all in the presence ; and he was accordingly dismissed. . . . Within as short a time as possible after this scene, the reigning family of Modena were one and all en route for Turin, and the prisoner, whose detention had produced such unforeseen effects, at liberty ; such being the orders left by the sovereign, probably from the idea that when the rebellious persons who were coming to rescue him,

discovered that he was already free, their violent purposes might alter, and Modena be left by them in safety.

It was not very long before the illustrious fugitives discovered that the Bolognese correspondent of the Modena gentleman had been altogether mistaken in the facts his letter communicated. . . . Bologna was perfectly tranquil, and their own Modena also ; whereupon they returned to their forsaken homes ; but, upon inquiry for the nervous gentleman who had suffered himself to be so unnecessarily alarmed by these idle rumours from Bologna, it was discovered that he and the late state prisoner had departed together ; and the next news heard of them was that they had arrived safely in America.

* * * * *

To-morrow we set off for Rome, and mean to take the little-frequented road that leads through what is called the pass of Forli, as we have been told by many that it will show us some of the finest scenery in Italy. I hope we may have better weather for it than what has accompanied us hitherto since we left Venice ; for we have scarcely seen the sun since the last time that we beheld him sink into the lagune.

LETTER IX.

Necessity of keeping to the Highways of Italy.— Dreadful Poverty and Ignorance of the Roman States.—Forli.—Beautiful Women.—The Madonnas of Guido and Guercino.—Passing the Rubicon.—Rimini.—Roman Bridge.—Francesca.—St. Anthony.—Julius Cæsar.—The Tombs of Malatesta.—View of the Adriatic.—Villa of Queen Caroline, near Pesaro.—Country between Fano and Foligno.—Urbino.—Raffael.—Pass of Furlo.—Spolito.—Clitumnus without Water.—Terrace Road from Terni to the Falls.—Germany and Italy.—The Falls of Terni.—Preparing for Rome.

Terni, November, 1841.

It is a dangerous experiment to quit the great routes through Italy in search of the picturesque, or of any thing else ; and since I closed my last letter we have experienced more difficulties (though I cannot conscientiously add *dangers*) than the whole of our journey had previously produced. . . . I believe I love fine scenery as well as most people ; but I do not think I would voluntarily undertake to endure the same again, unless some one particularly worthy of credit in such matters would vouch for my seeing something as wonderful as Niagara, or as beautiful as Schwatz, as my reward. It is not, however, so much the badness of the road that I complain of, as the very “plentiful lack” of accommodation at the miserable little inns. . . . Never before have

I been so literally called upon to "enter into the venerable presence of Hunger, Thirst, and Cold," as during this memorable expedition. To make this statement accurately correct, however, the word "Dirt," must be substituted for "Cold." Although we have occasionally been met by a cutting and a biting wind, that accorded not well with the rich foliage, which has still for the most part more the aspect of August than of November. . . . But the dirt and melancholy neglect of themselves, which we have found among the people at the miserable little inns, where we have been obliged to pass several nights, is beyond any thing you can imagine, and has offered us a sadder picture of human misery, ignorance, and destitution than I have ever witnessed except perhaps among the manufacturing population of Manchester and its neighbourhood. . . . The wretched ignorance and poverty of the Ecclesiastical States presses most painfully upon the observation at every step you go, by every object you see, and from every question you ask. . . . "It is not that we are idle," said a man with whom my son entered into conversation. "We are not idle. . . . We would dig the very rocks to get bread, if we were not so sorely burdened." "Si gravita," was his phrase and he added, that those who would live well must live either in Tuscany or Lombardy. "A man may do well in either."

The consequence of this sort of hopeless despair is a supine abandonment of all the little contrivances which we so frequently see giving decency, and even comfort, to poverty. . . . Rags, filth, and very deficient nourishment, all seem endured with a degree of sullen calmness, that must be either the prelude to a storm, or one stage of a process, by which the inhabitants of this unhappy portion of the finest country in the world is to sink into a moral condition in no way superior to that of Hottentots.

There is something inexpressibly painful in travelling through a country where the contrast is so fearfully strong, between the munificent operations of nature and the pitiful management of man and this too in a land that owns the same language as that spoken in the prosperous fields of Tuscany and Lombardy. . . . In many cases the commonest resources of human industry appeared to be absolutely unknown. . . . We were repeatedly told, when asking for milk, "that no cows were kept in that neighbourhood." "That there was nothing for them to eat." And *that* in a climate where the very air seems to generate vegetation ! But all this is too painful to dwell on and, moreover, so very *very* useless a speculation for those who are here only to obey the mandate, "Guarda e passa," that the sooner we leave it, the better.

Our starvings, &c. did not begin, however,

till after we had quitted the beaten track by which travellers of all nations find their way to Rome, and which the gold they scatter so freely as they pass has of course, in some degree, redeemed from the poverty which presses upon the population who are beyond the reach of it. Forlì, of all the towns we have yet passed through in the Roman states, seems the least affected by the sort of paralysis which generally appears to affect them. . . . Whether it has within itself any peculiar incentive and encouragement to industry, I know not; but it is less in *décadence*, and far less dirty than its neighbours. It is true that it was a Sunday on which we halted there; but many a village and town have we looked at, seen on the Sabbath day, where, though the wretched-looking inhabitants drag themselves to mass, they drag their rags and their filth with them. . . . But it was not so at Forlì. We saw many extremely well dressed ladies, and not a few very decently clad peasants, and were greatly struck by the exceeding beauty, both of form and feature, which most of them displayed. . . . Here again we had living Raffaels, and moving Titians; and certainly, as far as expressive physiognomy goes, the painters of Italy have a far better chance of producing the "counterfeit presentment" of a lovely woman than any other. . . . Besides its living beauties, this pretty town has the good fortune to possess two inestimable fair treasures, not living, though

while looking at them it is a little difficult to believe it. . . . These are the two exquisite Virgins by Guercino and Guido. The first is in the church of St. Philip of Neri, and is called "The Annunciation." The other is in the church of St. Jerome, and is known as "The Conception." . . . The subject being in fact the same, and treated by both these great artists with extraordinary genius and skill. Guido's Mary is the *beau-ideal* of youthful purity, clothed in a form hovering between childhood and womanhood, and lovely as a poet's dream. Youth, innocence, simplicity, and beauty are wrought together into a piece of mimic life, that looks much fitter for heaven than for earth. The Mary of Guercino is less young, and perhaps somewhat less lovely; but as she kneels, lonely and apart, on the pavement of some Jewish temple, there is a rapt and holy solemnity in her solitary devotion that is inexpressibly beautiful; and both these admirable pictures have a speaking poetry about them, that I can well believe any honestly sincere Roman Catholic may believe to be inspired.

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After leaving Forli we indulged ourselves, like all other travellers, in long discussions as to *when* we were passing the Rubicon . . . or whether we *had* passed it . . . or where we were most likely to pass it; and, moreover, in conformity to immemorial usage, left the important question

exactly as we found it. In entering Rimini, we passed over an almost perfect Roman bridge of marble, beautiful in form, and beautiful by its wonderful preservation. By its date, it must have been built during the lifetime of our Saviour, and it is inscribed with the consular names of the day. It certainly looks as little likely to perish now as if it had been reared but yesterday; and, on the whole, leaves but little opportunity for the moderns to pride themselves on the art of bridge-making. Beside Waterloo it would certainly look but a toy in size, yet there is a noble simplicity and firmness about it, which would sustain its rank and dignity amidst a thousand giants. . . . Not even the marble bridge, however, made us forget Francesca but though a palace still exists, called the Palezzo *Ruffo*, which is said to have replaced the edifice in which she lived, there seemed to exist much less local interest about Francesca here than concerning Juliet at Verona. The hero of Rimini is St. Antony; and there is little chance that any heroine, even though sung in the very choicest strains of Dante, should be able to make head against him. Julius Cæsar, however, is not altogether forgotten; for they have a pedestal in the market-place, to commemorate his haranguing his soldiers previous to their passing the Rubicon.

But, perhaps, the most interesting of all the memorials of Rimini are those erected on the

outside of the church of St. Francis, by a certain Sigismundo Malatesta, to the memory of the great men — poets, philosophers, and warriors — with whom he had been familiar while they lived. It is rare to find this reverence for genius in a bold, fighting prince-captain of the fifteenth century; and the manner in which the idea has been executed is strikingly effective and noble.

Nothing can be more desolate, though still there is beauty in the desolation, than the commencement of the mountain-road between Pesaro and Fossombrone. The near approach to the sea, always a reviving object to the spirits on a long journey, produced all its usual effect here, and the bright waves of the Adriatic were welcomed with a cordial “Hail!” Yet not even this beautiful and ever-interesting object could prevent our being conscious of the peculiarly melancholy aspect of the land view. The low slimy bank along which the road passes for some miles may rival the shores of the Mississippi in flatness, and a stunted growth of pale juniper is the only decoration of the scene. Nay, even when all this mends, and the road mounts amidst hills which soon give a good bold look-out, there is nothing gay, nothing *riante* in the scene. I wonder what the Queen Caroline of England found here sufficiently attractive to induce her to the choice of this unkind-looking locality as a home. I know not even the name of the rather handsome palace thus

chosen, but it is situated a few miles only from Pesaro, and its principal feature is a very long straight garden walk, leading from the road to the mansion, and lined on both sides with statues. The lady must, I think, have found a most absolute retirement there. . . . The character of the scenery, however, soon changes from dull and desolate to great, but wild, sublimity. The road, indeed, is horrible, especially after such heavy rains as we had encountered since leaving Venice, but our vetturino seemed to find very little difficulty in procuring oxen from time to time, and by their aid we mastered all the difficulties of this exceedingly interesting part of the road. Their slow movement was no objection here, for not even Dr. Johnson himself would have wished to be rolled rapidly along through such a series of majestic views as are found between Fano and Foligno. But here, alas! when the beauty was greatest, the misery of the inns was greatest also and dark, majestic, savage scenery, gloomy weather, and supperless retirements to sleepless beds, are all strangely jumbled together in my memory of this portion of our journey. We looked up to Urbino, however, and thought of Raffael, and of the wild scenes on which his young eyes looked out. If Salvator had been born there instead, one should have followed very satisfactorily the history of his inspirations. But it must have been in the depths of a cloister or a studio that the young

Raffael dreamed his St. Cecilia, and then painted her.

The part of this wild road called the pass of Furlo commences by an old Roman cut, of half a mile long, through solid rock, forming what is now called La Strada del Furlo. This great work was admirably well performed, and sends one back to the time when men in authority might say, "Do this," even to the moving of mountains, with very good assurance of being obeyed. . . . The road then follows for a long way the course of the river Metaurus, which was exceedingly picturesque, not only from having water in it . . . which is a great addition to the beauty of a river . . . but being closed in with lofty rocks at some points, and finely wooded acclivities at others. This road is certainly for a few miles exceedingly beautiful, and well worthy the *détour* necessary to reach it; for travellers who travel *post*, and who may, perhaps, by this means, and an hour or two stolen from their pillows in the morning, be enabled to get through the least frequented part of it without stopping for the night at any of those miserable little inns which have left so painful an impression on my memory. . . . A provision-basket, also, would be as necessary as post-horses to make the scheme agreeable . . . for the wine is undrinkable, and the food pretty nearly as uneatable. . . . Had I not been furnished with a travelling "Etna," and some excellent arrow-root from Venice, we

should have more than once been very seriously distressed for a meal. It may give you some idea of the state of "human advancement" on this route, if I tell you that at Spolito, when shoes were given at the inn to be cleaned, the man inquired if he was to take them to the shoemaker . . . having never heard of the blacking process before.

There is a certain bridge, however, on this road, of such stupendous construction (another old Roman work), that the sight of it is certainly worth many bottles of the very finest blacking. . . . I have not science enough to describe its peculiarities intelligibly, and will only tell you in womanly phrase, that it is a bridge upon a bridge, and that the looking down from it is an amusement worthy of an eagle. In one of the little towns, where we remained for an hour or two, more for the satisfaction of our vetturino horses than for our own, we were, as usual, putting the time to what profit we could, by climbing to the highest point within reach, for the purpose of looking about us, when our attention was attracted by a group of two or three peasants who were employed in mending the road. . . . This work, a very necessary one, for the road was full of deep holes, was performed in this wise . . . an old man, furnished with the fragment of a basket which he carried on his head, went to and fro, between the place under repair and a sort of little provisional quarry of gravel, which seemed to

have been recently opened in a bank at no great distance. Of this gravel he brought as much as his own strength and that of his frail basket could convey, and threw it down before two women, who completed the work by spreading it where it was most wanted, one of them employing her hands for the purpose, and the other, evidently an *employée* of greater dignity, being furnished with a carpenter's small hammer, which she used sometimes after the fashion of a rake, and sometimes of a mallet, and which was just as well suited for the one as the other. . . . Through all this region our eyes were regaled by the pretty pictures produced by the outline of the women's head-dresses, which when seen at a distance have an excellent effect, being of the form with which painters of Italian landscape-figures have made us familiar, from Salvator to the annual artist of yesterday. But the charm vanishes upon a near approach; for the material, which artists represent as fine white linen, was often supplied by very filthy rags; and in one case, where the arrangement of the flat square front with the depending lappets was quite perfect, and looked charmingly at a distance, we found on approaching that it was formed by the residue of an old *jupon de flanelle* of a colour indescribable.

At Spolito we found the Clitumnus without a drop of water, notwithstanding the advanced season (4th November) and the abundant rains which had been falling. On reaching the precipitous

street of this once strongly defended little town, I remarked a lane which called itself "Via della Fonte Secca;" and at no great distance above, we read an inscription on the wall of an old edifice, stating that it had been rebuilt, after being overthrown by an earthquake. How long all the rivers which I have seen in Italy dry, or nearly so, have been in that condition I know not; but if their drainage has been advancing rapidly, I should think that we might be likely to hear of more earthquakes. This dry Clitumnus was navigable from its mouth to a point not far distant from its source in the time of the Romans; but if the world lasts long enough, its name may become that of a ridge of mountains. . . . Perhaps by the time the United States are grown into a prosperous monarchy, which shall rival the Russias, her Mississippi may rival the Alleganies.

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We arrived at Terni yesterday, and have spent the greater part of a very delightful day here. The weather, which, with little intermission, has been wet and almost wintry since we left Venice, has to-day and yesterday been most brilliantly beautiful, and this contrast may have helped to give effect to the charming scenery around this place . . . for it seems more lovely to our eyes than any thing we have yet seen in the way of landscape. The new road which runs along the side of the Monte di Marmore, and which when completed is to reach Naples without passing by Rome, is the

finest drive I know. . . . This marble mountain is very nearly covered by a most profuse growth of arbutus now in their very highest beauty, their golden fruit hanging in heavy clusters, with a richness of colouring that makes the memory of the loaded vines we admired in the autumn poor and pale. The downward view from this bold terrace must be seen to be conceived. There is a vastness, a richness, a glory about it, to which form, vegetation, and atmosphere all contribute, and which is altogether totally unlike every northern landscape I have seen. Even the olive orchards, now laden with their dark fruit, and seen blended with all that is most brilliant in nature, assist the beauty, and together with the richly-wooded Apennines still in the highest pride of foliage, and the lovely plain at their feet the towns, the villas, the villages, the air and the sky, gave me, I think for the first time, fully to understand what people meant by talking of the surpassing *beauty* of Italy. The new road from Terni to its falls, I am quite ready to confess, is the most splendid thing I remember *but yet*, nevertheless, and notwithstanding, I still think that Germany, taken altogether, is more picturesque than Italy, taken altogether. If indeed, I wished to fancy myself the inhabitant of a rainbow, and felt that bright tints, and the respiring a sort of golden air, were necessary for my enjoyment, I never would recross the Alps. . . . But though all this is charming,

I *believe* that I think the rocks and river of In-spruck more charming still though I can well believe that there are but few who would agree with me. I remember once hearing a lady say, while some wild gigantic mountain scenery was under discussion, that she did not like it at all, for that it always seemed to her as if there was something *uncomfortable* in that sort of thing now this was a sort of *multum in parvo* remark, which, though I confess it sounded rather trifling at the moment, encloses a great deal of wisdom, and that too sifted from every grain of affectation. I have often recalled it since, and I admire it exceedingly. This is the feeling which makes the gentle air, and the bright heaven of Italy, so often atone, and oh ! how much more than atone, for the unvarying repetition of its Apennine heights in one region, and its unvarying plain in another. This air and sky, the loveliest gifts of heaven, together with the art, which is the richest gift of man, may well make Italy take the place she holds in the hearts and imaginations of those who have opened their eyes, and drawn their breath in the truly "*dolce paese*," that bears her name *but yet* again, there certainly are some people who like to be *uncomfortable*, particularly when they can contrive to arrange the discomfort exactly according to their own fancy. . . . But is it not abominable to enter upon a discussion concerning Teutonic and Italic beauty while on the road to the falls of Terni?

It is not giving fair play to the former, and yet it is doing very decided wrong to the latter. Of this beautiful cataract, I can only say that those who have found it less than magnificent must have visited it under less favourable circumstances than we did. I have seen many waterfalls in my day, and have not forgotten any of them ; but with the somewhat unusual abundance of water which they have just now, I consider Terni, as seen from below, second only to Niagara. . . . It matters little whether nature or a Roman emperor caused the river Velino and all its tributaries to precipitate its accumulated waters at one terrific dash into the Nera. . . . The thing is done, and this *Caduta delli Marmore* comes dashing down between seven and eight hundred feet which it takes at two leaps in a style of pretty nearly unequalled grandeur. To complete the charm, the surrounding scenery is just what it ought to be at intervals grim and rocky, and bright between, with a thousand different hues of rich Italian vegetation, which are all now heightened, by the touch of autumn, into the very highest imaginable splendour of colouring.

It was no easy task, after nearly ten days of rain, to descend from the point at which the water takes its first downward spring to the river that receives it below. But we were none of us in a humour to be stopped by trifles ; so we slid, slipped, and scrambled to the bottom, and thence beheld it in its full-

est glory. There is something whimsical, and I believe it is generally called enchanting, in the sudden transition from the wild mountain path, and that beside the boiling river at its foot, into the orange gardens of the Villa Graziani. There are certainly one or two points in the grounds from whence glimpses of the cataract are caught which may enable you to forget the orange-trees; but the excursion would be greatly more perfect, in my opinion, if the last half mile, which brings you to the picturesque little town where the carriage left above has come to meet you, still led along the river's side, instead of through this Italian garden. . . . The pretty lad whom we had taken at the top of the cascade to be our guide told me that this villa had been inhabited for a year by a queen of England, and then, with the learning of inherited ciceronism, he pointed to seats placed under the shelter of a thick canopy of ilex, and said it was there that "il Signore Bergami e la regina" used to dine.

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It was in conversing with this boy that I first became sensible of the extraordinary difference between the Roman pronunciation of the Italian language and that of all other places where we had been . . . and it was then only that I listened to one of the common people, without finding any difficulty whatever in understanding what was said. This gave me a degree of pleasure which induced

me to make him talk as much as possible, and, nothing loth, he told me local anecdotes of almost every spot we passed. One of these was a very sad one, and the boy shed tears before he reached the end of it. In crossing the little bridge over the Nera, nearly at the foot of the fall he stopped, and, pointing to a spot at which the bank of the river projected a little into the stream, he said, "A very sad thing happened just there about this time last year." . . . "And what was that?" said I. "I will tell you the story if you will," he replied, and standing quite still till he received my answer. "Do," I said; "I should like much to hear it." He then moved slowly forward again, his hands being clasped together behind him, and his dark eyes fixed upon the ground. — "It was early in the spring time of last year," he said, "that a young girl, called Ginditta (something or other, I forget what), was asked to give her love to a young man called Marco . . . and a good lad he was too, though a poor one; too poor for Ginditta, for her father was a great deal richer . . . and so when Marco said he loved her he was told never to look at her, or speak to her again. But Ginditta did not think him too poor, for she loved him dearly, and so she told him; and she told her father so too, and went down upon her knees to beg for leave to marry him. . . . But her father would not hear of it, and called poor Marco all manner of bad names, which was very wicked, because he did not deserve

to be called any thing worse than poor. And Ginditta told Marco that he must not think of her any more, and that they must never meet again, and bear the sorrow of it as well as they could. . . . And so for about three months they never did see one another, and Ginditta never went where she thought she could see him, but did in all things exactly what her father, cruel and hard as he was, desired her to do. But it happened one day at the end of that time that, as she was going with some olives that her father ordered her to carry to the house of a gentleman two miles away, she met a young man, who shook hands with her the moment he saw her; but she did not know at first that it was Marco, because he was so sadly altered, and looked so thin and pale. But when she found who it was, and heard him say that he was very glad he was dying, because he could not see her, her heart was almost broken, and she told Marco to come the next day to her father's house, for she thought she should have good news to tell him. And then she left him, and went home as fast as she could go and she knelt down before her father, and told him who she had seen, and how he looked, and once more, with tears in her eyes, begged him to have pity on them both, and let them be married. . . . But instead of this softening his heart, it only put him in a rage, and he gave Ginditta a kick with his foot, and said that he would turn her out of doors for ever if she dared

to utter the name of Marco again. Ginditta said not a word, but got up, and went to her mother, who was sitting spinning at the door, and kissed her two or three times, and then walked away; but still without speaking a word. . . . It was rather latish in the evening that I was standing watching the flies just in the middle of the bridge there, when I suddenly heard a voice in the water, and, looking down the stream just to that place opposite, I saw Ginditta in the water, and in the very next minute she was out of sight. But I knew her, though I saw her but for an instant, and I ran,—oh! I ran very fast,—and got down to the very edge just as she came rising up again, and then I caught hold of her, and tried to pull her out; . . . but I could not, because I was not so big and so strong then as I am now; but I did not let her go, keeping fast hold, and trying to hold her up. But the stream ran very strong, for the weather had been just like this year, very rainy, and all I could do was to follow as it pulled her away down the stream, and hold her fast; and so I did till I met two men, who pulled her out directly. . . . But it was too late . . . she was quite quite dead.” And here he stopped, sobbing in spite of his very best endeavours to go on. “And what became of her hard-hearted father?” said I. “He never seemed to mind it,” returned the boy, “for no one ever heard him say a word about it. But Marco died within a month . . . and her mother, they say,

has never smiled since, even to her little boy, who is almost a baby. . . . Ginditta was the prettiest girl in the whole country and poor Marco was my cousin."

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And now we are about to set off upon our last stage towards Rome. . . . It is impossible to write these words without a certain *battement de cœur*. . . . Do you not envy me? I promise you I would not be any where else at this particular moment for a good deal ; and yet at present it is rather the name of Rome than the reality that lies before us, for we intend after the interval of one single day to proceed to Naples, making our visit to the Eternal City the last of our abidings in Italy. — Farewell.

LETTER X.

Arrival at Rome. — St. Peter's. — Disappointment from the View of the Exterior. — The Portico. — The Church. — Absence of all Secondary Objects. — Westminster Abbey as seen after a Coronation. — Promenade. — The Sacra Confeffione. — Doubts respecting it. — The Monument of Pius the Sixth. — View from the Leads. — Coliseum. — Campagna. — Visit to the Coliseum. — Roman Catholic Station. — Value of the Cross on such a Spot. — Hôtel de l'Europe.

Rome, Nov. 7th, 1841.

I HAVE entered Rome, and looked up its Corso from the Porta del Popolo. . . . I have slept one night here, and have passed one day yet to-morrow, by early dawn, I must leave it. . . . As this arrangement is wholly my own, I have no good reason to complain of it; yet I can hardly help fancying that I am greatly to be pitied. . . . I have just seen enough to make me long so very much to see more. . . . But it may not be: every thing is now settled, and we set off for Naples to-morrow.

The last few miles before entering Rome are as full of human interest as they are void of natural beauty. . . . It is a wild unprofitable desert that we pass through in drawing near to the papal throne; and though the heaven above is bright, and the

air, even in November, mild, I have seen many a remote district, unhonoured and unsung, that looked more favoured by God and more cared for by man. . . . But the mind has but little leisure to dwell upon the melancholy want of cultivation, or to speculate upon its cause. . . . To the right, to the left, before you, as far as the eye can reach, are fragments of Roman work ; which seen here, at the very threshold of the Imperial City, have a degree of local interest which more precious monuments might fail to create elsewhere. I felt as if I were drawing near to where whole legions of Roman ghosts must be hovering round, who might challenge the pigmy invasion ; and every fragment that their hands had reared seemed sacred. . . . I had for miles past been feeling that had I time allowed, and a local antiquarian beside me, I might have got into familiar intercourse with a world of Roman relics, any one of which, if seen singly, would elsewhere have been looked at with reverence but now we kept driving onwards with so barbarous an air of indifference that I felt perfectly ashamed of it. All I could do to testify my respect I did for when told by the driver that from the top of the next hill St. Peter's would be visible, I positively insisted upon leaving the carriage, and walked with my son to this hill of promise, that we might, when catching sight of Michael Angelo's dome for the first time, have power to pause for a moment, and say " There it is."

The vetturino was right. . . . After leaving the carriage, we quitted the road a little, for the sake of attaining the summit of an accidental eminence that was somewhat higher than any part of it; and having reached this, there indeed stood St. Peter's before us; and there, too, stood St. Angelo; and there rolled the snake-like Tiber, at that moment bright in sunshine. . . . Amidst all the wonders of creation, are there any the sight of which can influence the spirit so powerfully as one little word — a NAME? Was it the dim outline of St. Peter's and St. Angelo's against the sky, or the sunny windings of the little stream between its level banks, that made this moment seem an epoch in our lives? Oh, no. . . . "By any other name" they would have seemed at that distance but little worth; but as it was, I felt that thousands might envy me the power of looking at them.

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And how do you think we have spent this our first Roman morning? Did we go to the Coliseum? or to St. Peter's? or to both? To both, most certainly; but it was St. Peter's which received the first visit.

Though previously assured that it was absolutely impossible for ladies to walk in Rome, I resolutely determined to approach St. Peter's for the first time on foot. I remembered, too, how much greater had been the effect of every building I approached

at Venice, than that of any seen in Florence, where, excepting upon one or two rare occasions of escape, I had always been driven to the door I was to enter. Quite aware, however, of the necessity of doing at Rome as the Romans do, I fully proposed, upon taking up my abode there, to provide myself with a carriage like other folks. . . . But now I was *scarcely* at Rome, only passing through it and therefore boldly set forth with I——, who by no means seemed inclined to check my temerity, and walked from the Piazza di Spagna to the Piazza del Vaticano. . . . The walking is indeed wretched, there being no pavement, or only for a few yards here and there, and carriages, waggons, carts, barrows, horses, asses, dogs, men, women, and children, all seeming well disposed to run at and over you without ceremony. My first reward for encountering all this was passing the statued bridge of St. Angelo, with the castle directly before my eyes at the end of it. I would at that moment have willingly agreed to receive sundry hard knocks rather than have been enclosed in any vehicle more encumbering than a triumphal car. . . . A single glance here gives such a mingled picture of Popish and Imperial Rome! Colossal saints in double file of marble stateliness are on either hand, with old Tiber rolling at your feet. The gigantic tomb of Adrian before you, with the papal fortress reared on the top of it; while up the river and down the river

may easily be caught, by the eye that seeks them, columned traces of Roman splendour, which seem to shrink into littleness before the towering wonder of the world, the unmatched dome of Michael Angelo. This last it was which marshalled us the way that we were going; and after pausing for a moment or two upon the bridge to look on all this, so new to the eye, yet so long familiar to the mind, we walked onward by the straight line which leads to the piazza of the Vatican.

Did any one ever approach St. Peter's without feeling a little nervous about it? nervous lest it should not be what they expected, and all they expected nervous lest their own spirit should not be firm enough to receive the strong impression, without crumbling into abject wonder, instead of being stamped with a type of sublimity that should remain upon it for ever?

Upon first raising my eyes to the front of the church on entering the place of the Vatican, I felt as if I had suddenly tumbled down the hill all my fine imaginings vanished, not into thin air, but into solid stone, — of a form so very much less majestic than I expected, that for a moment I positively doubted if indeed it was St. Peter's before which I stood; though the majestic piazza, with its circular colonnades, its fountains, and its vast papal palace, forbade me to doubt it longer. . . . My companion and I first exchanged glances, and then words, sadly deficient in respect, concerning

this well-accredited object of all men's veneration and then we agreed to move onward, and see if things would improve with us as we advanced. . . . The fountains improved the obelisk improved; and so did the imposing colonnade, which seemed, with its outstretched arms, to offer a Roman Catholic embrace to all the world but not so the church. The nearer we approached to it the lower sank the dome, and the higher rose the front; which, with its small (looking) square attic windows, had an aspect as unlike as possible to the majestic basilica I had expected. I was altogether discomfited but, as not all my regrets could avail to rebuild St. Peter's, I again, diminished as it was in my imagination, rather eagerly went forward, and ere long placed my foot on the first step of the ascent to the portico.

From that moment a sort of enchantment seemed to be set at work upon my senses, that has no parallel out of a fairy tale. All the objects before me appeared suddenly to expand into proportions more majestic than any my hopes and expectations had ever suggested; or my fancy either, save when following the Greek visions of Moore. The portico, with its fretted roof, which it almost strains the eye to reach; the equestrian guards at either end of it gigantic in size, and gigantic in name but no lesser mortals than Charlemagne and Constantine might be set thus to keep eternal

watch and ward upon this matchless temple
the three brazen doors that seem to

“ Lift their everlasting portals high,
And bid the pure in heart behold their God ;”

all this, beheld from behind the Corinthian screen of columns, forms something so infinitely exceeding in grandeur all my preconceived notions of a portico, that I literally *trembled* at the idea of entering the temple to which it led.

But after gazing at it for a while, my companion lifted a corner of the massive leathern curtain, and the next moment found us in *the church of St. Peter at Rome*.

Almost every one whom I have heard describe their sensations on entering this building appear to have felt what I had already experienced on contemplating the exterior they were unconscious, at the first glance, of its enormous size. . . . I suppose it was because I had already passed through this part of the process, that I felt differently now. . . . It seemed to me as if I stood in a new world, the very elements of which had been hitherto unknown to me. I had passed years in seeking out every specimen of fine church architecture that ever came within my reach, and no structures raised by hands have left such strong or such cherished pictures on my fancy as the Gothic edifices of England, France, Belgium, and Germany. But there was nothing *HERE* that could by possibility recal any of them. . . . No invidious

comparisons could be made. There was nothing to obscure or deface the memory of other churches. The delicate tracery of the very smallest Gothic shrine might maintain its fame beside St. Peter's, without losing an atom of its glory or its charm . . . just as the complicated loveliness of the *Kalmia latifolia* may keep its place beside the awful cedar.

To describe the sort of rapture which the standing still to gaze within this building inspires, would be very difficult ; to define it, impossible. . . . It is made up, I suppose, of an elevating consciousness of vast sublimity, a luxurious sense of most harmonious beauty, and a high-wrought feeling of religious holiness. I cannot easily believe that any Protestant Christian ever stood beneath its roof, without claiming it in his heart as a Christian temple, within which all petty doubts and difficulties of creed and doctrine might safely be laid aside, while a prayer is breathed to the " Father of all," on the spot where man has done the most, and the best, to render the shrine worthy of the Deity.

To request the architects of the Christian world in general to follow the excellent example of those who reared St. Peter's would not, perhaps, be of much practical utility ; and yet there is one point, and a very essential one, on which imitation might set to work, from the mighty minster at Cologne to the pretty little *bijou* at Gloucester, with excel-

lent effect. Who shall say how much of the absorbing, thrilling, eye-enchanting effect of St. Peter's arises from the absence of every object that can break into the one perfect harmony of its entire whole? Were there altar screens, organ lofts, tribunes, pulpits, or stalls, I greatly doubt if the emotions produced would be so powerful. It is certain that many buildings which have not vastness to boast, may be admirable from other qualities; and wherever the proportions are fine, a charm exists totally independent of size (witness King's College Chapel at Cambridge). But this must ever be cruelly marred by all or any of the accessories which I have named, and which, by a little ingenuity, might always be done away with, or at any rate so subdued as to prevent the mischief which so very often destroys all general effect.

I well remember going to see Westminster Abbey *after* the preparations for the coronation of William the Fourth had been removed, and *before* the ordinary arrangements of the cathedral were replaced and it was then only that I knew how beautiful was our justly boasted abbey of Westminster. It may not compare in size with Antwerp, Strasburg, or Cologne nor with very many others that it would be easy to enumerate; but, when thus disencumbered, no sense of littleness could be felt. It was graceful, noble, rich, and exceeding beautiful; but when I saw it again, with

the long line of its fine aisle broken, and its choir encumbered with pews, I could scarcely recal the beautiful vision which had come to revisit our eyes in all the pristine beauty of its former state of existence. I never shall be able to recognise any genuine Protestant piety in thus disfiguring, as we do, our old cathedrals . . . though I confess there be many Romish ones which fare but little better.

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It takes a good while, after entering St. Peter's, before it is possible to set about examining the manifold treasures which encrust its walls; and hoping as we did to pass many hours within them, we indulged again and again in a promenade decidedly without its equal in the world . . . namely, from the great western door up to the stupendous baldacchino, of ninety feet high, at the eastern extremity, sometimes on one side of the *sacra confessione*, and sometimes on the other, catching glimpses of monumental statues and enormous mosaics as we passed, of which we seemed, in a miserly spirit, to be hoarding the examination for the future. Of the magnificent bronze tabernacle reared over the bones of St. Peter, and illuminated night and day by a hundred lamps, I know not whether to say that I admire or dislike it most. That I do both is certain. Its richness and its picturesque magnificence render it an object that it is quite impossible not to gaze upon with admiration; while its interference with the general style,

and the interruption it offers to the majestic space in which the eye so greatly delights to revel, as well as something of barbaric caprice in its decoration, make it almost a deformity. Nevertheless, I decided at last that I would not have it away if I could . . . any more than the hideous statue of the old bronze St. Peter, whose toe is so incessantly kissed by the devout. Both are precious from their *fitness*, and from their local rights. . . . And if a canopy of enduring brass *was* to be reared over the bones of Paul and Peter, it would have been difficult to render it more superb . . . while, even to a Protestant eye, there is something worthy at least of reverence, though not of worship, in the dust that lies thus splendidly enshrined, and the last receptacle of which you may discern through the gold lattice-work of the gates, to which a double stair of richest marble leads down from the level of the church.

But though I can thus bring myself, without any great difficulty, to be reconciled to the brazen canopy, I cannot make my fancy so pliable respecting Canova's exquisite statue of Pius VI., which kneels before the gates of the sunken sepulchre, and is thereby seen if not exactly with difficulty, at least to a very great disadvantage. It is said that Canova wept when he found that this favourite and most admirable of all his portraits was to be so very nearly buried, even though it, in some sort, was to share the sepulchre of St. Peter himself.

We had just diverged from the promenade I have described, in order to behold to advantage the interior of the miraculous dome, when we were met by a Florentine acquaintance, who, having an order for himself and a party to mount to the top of the church, offered us the *entrée* with them, as their number was still incomplete, and the hour past at which the party had engaged to assemble. . . . We accepted this kindness willingly, though it detained us longer than we intended; but the day was beautiful, and the idea of looking out thus advantageously upon Rome too pleasant to be resisted. We accordingly began the long ascent, which, as far as the leads, is almost as easy as that of the Campanile at Venice, which might, without the slightest inconvenience, be mounted on horseback. The prodigious length of the way, however, renders it fatiguing; but I would willingly have endured it fourfold, rather than not have seen the structure itself, as well as the extraordinary view from it. It is certainly on the roof that you become fully aware of the enormous size of the building. Walking on the roof among the various domes and cupolas, is wonderfully like walking through the streets of a city crowded with temples; while the less superb and commercial part of it is well represented by the numerous work-shops, and even dwellings of the artificers, who are continually employed in keeping up its perfect and admirable preservation.

As to the view, which of course commands the whole of ancient and of modern Rome, it is impossible, I think, to look down upon it without strongly mingled emotions of reverence and regret. Oh! what a vast and varied page of the world's history lies there! . . . So much of honour, pride, and human glory levelled to the dust! . . . Such treasures of human intellect and ingenuity injured or destroyed! . . . Such speaking relics of the ages after ages that have rolled on, and still found them enduring! . . . The best feature in the view was the looking down from a Christian temple (though a Popish one) upon the walls of the ruined Coliseum, where men and women congregated by thousands to recreate themselves by watching the death agony of fellow-men. Rome was not built in a day; nor will it be *wholly* purified in many . . . but enough of good has been done to lead us rationally to hope for more . . . and there are many signs, which some read one way and some another, but which it is by no means difficult to construe into pleasant hope.

The *worst* feature in the view is, to my feeling, the vast *campagna*, which might, with very easy service, and beyond all possibility of doubt, be made to produce corn, instead of generating, as it does at present, an annual harvest of death. There is in this, and in the causes assigned for it, much that is very terrible. . . . But it is not a subject to be mixed up with my travelling adventures, or

proper to be treated lightly any where. That there is a power to cure the evil, is certain; but that there is also a power able, at present, to prevent its cure is certain also, and how the matter will end, I believe that the very wisest man living would, if he had power to look every way, be greatly at a loss to guess.

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But we had vowed to ourselves, that we would not leave Rome till we had visited the Coliseum; and we therefore allowed ourselves, on this occasion, but scanty time to look down from the internal galleries that thread the dome, or to examine the marvellous mosaics that line it. Every thing in St. Peter's is great, stupendous, wonderful, and the mind, during a first visit, at least, is kept so constantly and violently on the stretch, that the sensation at last becomes almost painful I look forward with exceeding pleasure to the idea of revisiting it more calmly.

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Nothing but the fixedness of the arrangements, which made the necessity of our leaving Rome on the morrow imperative upon us, could in any degree excuse the impetuous folly of flying to the Coliseum, after having just paid a first visit to St. Peter's and nothing can give a stronger idea of what the Coliseum and its surrounding objects must be, in point of interest, than the fact that every feeling of fatigue of body and exhaus-

tion of spirits was forgotten, and that we gazed upon it with as much freshness of delight, as if we had never seen any thing beautiful and majestic before. How any building so completely in ruin can be so very full of grace and beauty, I know not neither will I pretend to say how much of the strong feeling excited is due to the imagination; but that there is a vast deal both of pleasure and wonder in it is very certain. What it must have been before the barbarous Barbarossa stripped it of its marble embellishments, it is not easy to imagine for the vastness of its size, and the exceeding beauty, so perceptible even in ruin, of its proportions, must have made it, when not only entire, but profusely embellished, *one* of the most glorious works that man ever reared though even then not so glorious as St. Peter's.

I was vexed at the painfully paltry effect produced by the twelve stations of our Saviour's passion, which are erected round the area of this majestic ruin. The neat trim little frames of masonry in which they are set forms a contrast that disgusts the eye, despite all that the heart can say to prevent it, between these deplorable little erections and the towering walls, so beautiful in their picturesque decay, which are crumbling around them. In the centre of the arena is a cross, with a step for passing penitents to kneel upon; and when I saw it thus employed, I became quite reconciled to the presence of the holy emblem,

and even felt that it was well placed there . . . where every thing recalled the need of expiation. . . . But the square little stations do not help this feeling; on the contrary, indeed, they greatly lessen it. If too, instead of the trumpery crucifix erected in the centre a simple cross were raised, somewhat like that upon the beach at Dieppe, I can fancy its producing an admirable effect, and one which every thought and every recollection would tend to render of good and holy influence.

As to all the thrice precious region around this primal wonder, the Coliseum, I will not venture to say a word about it, till I have had better opportunity to look around me there, than was left us after our lingering examination of the especial object which took us to the spot. . . . I saw, and I felt, that I was in the very centre of all that was left of the most beautiful amidst ancient Rome. . . . But knowing this, I actually shut my eyes as I re-entered the carriage which conveyed us thither, determined not to see *any thing*, till I could see *more* than that hurried moment would permit.

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It would be ungrateful to turn away from our excellent hôtel, the "Europe," in the Piazza di Spagni, without bearing testimony to its merits. I think it would be impossible to enter a house better calculated to make the traveller feel and rejoice in the difference between journeying to Rome, and finding himself there. In truth, I leave

this delightful "Europe" in fear and trembling, lest the contrast between every thing there, and all I am to encounter between it and Naples, should prove even worse than we expect. But the thoughts of the BAY at the end of the journey must sustain our courage through all the evils of it. . . . Malaria and so forth included.

LETTER XI.

Star-light View of Naples.—A Morning Walk.—Perfection of Colouring.—Theory respecting it.—Poverty and Filth of the Population.—Question as to what they might be under other Influences.—State of the Country between Rome and Naples.—Conduct of a Sentinel at the Gate of Capua.—Promised Pleasures at Naples.—Pæstum of Necessity abandoned.

Naples, Nov. 12th, 1841.

HERE we are, my friend, established at the pleasant "Vittoria," the sea on the left hand, the commencement of the noble Chiaja on the right, and the umbrageous Villa Reale gardens in front of us. . . . We arrived late at night, and then of course saw nothing but the stars, which seemed to shine with equal brilliancy above and below us, the Mediterranean serving as a mirror that reflected both the light and the darkness. . . . But when we opened our eyes in the morning we felt that it was impossible to look upon any thing more beautiful than the scene before us. Though London November and Neapolitan November are as little alike as may be, there was nevertheless a brisk breeze, which made the little fishing craft dance as they approached the beach . . . but this only added to the beauty, and when (at my usual early hour) I

stood upon my balcony, and caught for the first time a sight of the dark blue Ischia, the line of coast stretching before me, bright in the morning sun, with the rich mass of Ilex, that seemed ready to buckler the palaces of the Chiaja against the saucy surge, I fancied that I had already seen Naples, and that the "poi mori" of the pun might be performed, either by my setting off for Greece, or lying down to die, as soon as I chose. . . . The first thing I did was to call upon my always ready companion, that we might set forth upon a walk through the Villa Reale, which seemed, notwithstanding its leafy fortifications, to promise advantageous look-outs without end nor did it deceive us. . . . It is quite impossible to conceive any thing more exquisitely lovely than the views from this most luxurious sea-walk, at the points where the trees open. We now saw Vesuvius, which, but for his fiery reputation, might pass in a crowd of hills without much notice but being, as he is, the most renowned of all accessible spit-fires, we looked at him with reverence, and with a very mischievous longing to see him set to work in his vocation. . . . He gave us for our pains a world of smoke but even this seemed a grace and a favour; and as we watched the dark wreaths against the sky, I am sure that we would not have exchanged so positive a proof of being at Naples for the brightest sky rockets in the world. But a fairer sight than this grim-looking little mountain,

notwithstanding the *prestige* of its hot-headed renown, was the line of coast towards Castellamare and Sorrento. The gentle curve of the bay, the colour of the sea and sky, and the sort of violet and amber glow that bathes the landscape, gives a glory to this scene which is all its own, but which, while it enchants the eye, and soothes the heart, has very little in common with what is usually called *fine* scenery. Did its beauty consist in majestic outline, it would be much less difficult to describe but it is almost as difficult for a pen to describe air, as for a chisel to cut breath; yet till this can be done, it must be a vain labour to attempt conveying any idea of the species of loveliness which has given Naples its renown.

Upon stretching our wanderings however, a little beyond the full dressed statue-and-flower-decked precincts of the Villa Reale, we came upon a series of pictures which certainly did not appear to owe their charm to the delicacy of the airs that breathed around them. Where the royal garden ends, in the closest possible juxtaposition to it, being scarcely separated by any fence at all, is a spot sacred to picturesque dirt, historic rags, and miscellaneous labour of the most various kinds. . . . Here we had Salvators, and Murillos, in life, to a degree of perfection that cannot be conceived without being seen. Groups of men drawing up their boats from the serf while others, at no great distance above them, the tide-

less waves giving no cause for fear, had their little vessels turned keel upwards, while they repair some threatening leak. . . . Another group, with a swarm of little boys to help them, were overhauling their nets; some standing, some sitting, some stooping, some lying down, as they examine the meshes, and all with an ease and grace of attitude, that to northern eyes appears extraordinary. Nor is it by form alone that the pictures are brought out. The colours of the garments, squalid and tattered as they are, have a perfection of harmony in their tints which positively led me to believe (and I do faithfully believe it) that the same sort of acute susceptibility of sense which makes them musicians, makes them also painters, . . . and that as a discord in sound would be painful to the most untaught ear amongst them, so would a discord in colour be intolerable to their eyes. I can really find no other intelligible theory to account for the unerring harmony of tint so remarkable in their garments. The variety, richness, and beauty of the browns in which they are all clad, is perfectly astonishing; and if a morsel of bright scarlet, or blue, or yellow, be introduced, it is exactly in the way that a painter would most wish for it. . . . The rude and hardy north may be . . . nay truly is, the region for moral strength and vigorous industry . . . but the sunny south has what Byron, perhaps too justly, calls "the fatal gift of beauty." . . . I find not this beauty in

the outline of her scenery, in the flow of her waters, or even in the aspect of her fields but in all that appertains to and is produced by the vivacity of the senses. . . . and to the acute perception of what is beautiful, whether to the ear or to the eye:

And in confirmation of this, it may be observed that they shun a too close contact with their own sweet flowers, being too susceptible to their odours to inhale them freely Neither can they endure the pungent peppery flavours, which more dormant palates require to awaken them the whole animal is more delicately organised *and the rich browns in the garments of the Lazzaroni is one of the results of it.*—Q. E. D. But alas! for the reverse of the medal! And what a world of wisdom might be *sermonata* on the equality of Nature's munificence, and on the fearful dangers of abusing her precious gifts! These Neapolitan pictures must be looked at from a distance. If you watch the *tableaux vivant* for a single moment, you will perceive beyond the happy possibility of a doubt, that if you approach too nearly, you may chance to become a *tableaux vivant* too.

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There is, too, an air of abject hopeless poverty here, that I never saw to an equal extent in any other place. I cannot call it misery, because, for the most part, the people have an air of gaiety. . . . But there is an evident absence of all the de-

cencies, and all the comforts, that industry, fairly remunerated, is sure to bring. It requires some courage to take even a glance within the dwellings of these poor people, . . . destitution and filth possess them wholly, and I should think that the shelter of a boat, keel upwards, must be often preferred to them. What these people might become were they living under the influence of wholesome and equal laws, and without the destructive nourishment to idleness, furnished by the eternal recurrence of Popish fêtes and festivals, it would be difficult to say. On the side of talent there is much in their favour; so is there in their power of endurance, which, if turned aright, might give all the energy they now seem to want; . . . but it is a question that can be answered only by experiment.

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The journey from Rome to Naples presents perhaps as lamentable a picture of civilised life as can well be imagined. I think I may venture to say, that no single trace of happy, prosperous, well paid industry, meets the eye from one end of it to the other. Rags, filth, ignorance, and superstition, are the prominent features that meet the observation of a traveller. In the villages, milk was a luxury unknown. . . . Of schools I could hear nothing, excepting those scattered thickly enough throughout the papal states, for the education of young priests. . . . And in the cultivation of the fields, there was such evident neglect of all the ordinary

modes of turning land to profit, that Tuscany, Lucca, and Lombardy rose upon the memory like so many samples of the sort of Paradise, into which the earth *might* be converted, where sunshine and human industry unite to make it fruitful. It is hardly possible, I think, to see a greater difference between the external symptoms of character, and the general *manière d'être*, than may be observed between the peasants of Tuscany, and those of Naples, and the Roman States. The Tuscan peasant has evidently a feeling of honest pride in himself, in his decent garments, in the produce of his labour, and in the roof that his thrift renders comfortable. But of this, there is not a trace left on your journey southward. There is a look of self abandonment even in the very children, that is terrible. . . . I am certainly not one of those who are inclined to quarrel with the exercise of human authority, being quite aware that without it, all societies of men must fall into a state of anarchy, which would speedily bring about the sort of catastrophe which befel the celebrated Kilkenny cats. . . . Nevertheless I was disgusted as much as the strongest theoretical democrat could be, when I saw the style in which a sentinel at the gate of Capua treated a peasant who was bringing a cart-load of vegetables into the town. The entrance into the town is through fortifications which often cause the road to turn, so as to render it impossible for any one advancing with a cart to see to any great dis-

tance before him, unless he leaves the side of his horse, in order to run forward to reconnoitre. . . . It chanced that our carriage in passing one of the gates, had to wait for a moment, while the above-mentioned cart of vegetables passed on; and on perceiving this, the sentinel caught the driver by the collar, and beat him across the shoulders with the flat of his sword, till he was evidently too tired to proceed, the perfectly unoffending peasant submitting to the discipline without daring to withdraw himself from it, for an inch, and with an expression of countenance, at once so abject and so mournful, that it will require many fine sights to put it out of my head, and some little sophistry perhaps into the bargain, to convince me that any happy being, born on British ground, does right in coming where he is to be *so* protected in return for the gold which he scatters as he goes along.

I have been receiving sundry pleasant visits, and seeing sundry pleasant people, and it is already very evident that we should like to prolong our stay beyond the time we have allotted for our visit here.—But at any rate we have time enough before us to *do* all the great things, save one. . . . We cannot go to Pæstum. This is a terrible disappointment, but it must be borne, for it has been made very clearly evident to us that it would be impossible to make the excursion at this season,

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without leaving Naples for two nights, at the very least ; which is too much time to give out of a fortnight ; especially as so much rain has fallen as to render it doubtful whether we could enjoy the scene, when we got to it, . . . so we are turning our eyes to what is nearer home, and we are to pass to-morrow at Baïæ.

LETTER XII.

Interest of the Road to Baïæ.—Grotto of Posilipo.—Virgil's Tomb.
 —Nisida.—Pozzuoli.—Classic Names.—The Lake of Avernus.
 —Its Temple.—The Sibyl's Cave.—Mesmerism.—Nero's Baths.
 —Temples.—Villas.—Piscina Mirabile.—The Tombs of Baïæ.—
 Hidden Treasures of the whole Neighbourhood.—Indifference to
 modern Sights.—Museum.—The Power of Art.

Naples, November, 1841.

"THEY do not err who say," that unless you would leave the world without seeing all that is most interesting in it, you must visit Italy. I had certainly raised my expectations concerning what I should see during this day at Baïæ pretty high; but the reality has so greatly exceeded these expectations, that I feel ashamed of the poverty of fancy and of information which could do no more towards preparing me for it. There is positively hardly a step of the way that is not pregnant with wonder. At a short distance beyond the beautiful Chiaja, we entered the marvellous grotto of Posilipo, so perfectly familiar to us all by name, yet so strangely new to the mind upon approaching it. Had I never seen our very useful and respectable rail-road tunnels, I think I should have been less electrified on entering the Grotto of Po-

silipo. It bears about the same proportion to our subterranean routes that the Coliseum does to our theatres. Will our dear little descendants travel contentedly through a rabbit burrow? And will they amuse themselves in theatres which, in our day, might serve for Punch? The immensity of these ancient works give me a sensation that I cannot describe to you. Surely it cannot be mortification that would be too silly, and too ungrateful. But, certes "there were giants in those days," giants in will, giants in enterprise, and, stranger still, giants in power, to carry their bold projects into effect. As we entered this wonderous arch, I remembered that Virgil slept above our heads, and thereupon a comforting thought passed across me, that great as he was, there had been greater since, as witness Danté, so that the deteriorating process is not quite uniform, and it may be, not quite certain; and I took comfort, and went on in better spirits.

The isle of Pisida, where Brutus lived, and Portia mourned for him, is a beautiful object from the road, after quitting the grotto. I could have wished that the building which now crowns its height, had been something more dignified and poetical than a Lazeretto.

At Pozzuoli the time we spent in waiting for a guide seemed all too long, for nothing can be much more miserable looking than the place not, however, including its antiquities! but

around these there is a solemn stillness, which seems to rest upon them despite the obtrusive vicinity of the town. The Temple of the Sun, or of Jupiter Serapis the bridge (so vaingloriously useless) of Caligula, and the marvellous Monte Nuovo, formed in six-and-thirty hours by volcanic action, all render this region superlatively interesting. Nor is there a possibility of turning your eyes in any direction from the time you quit the grotto, without their resting on objects that it would take months, aye years, to look upon, ere the interest of them would fade. The names of Nero, Cicero, Lucullus, are sounding in your ear familiar as household words; and difficult does it grow to believe that all this freshness of local reminiscence belongs to the same beings that we have been accustomed to think of, so dimly and so distantly. And stranger is it still, when you reach what in reading Virgil seems so completely a land of fable, that the Bolgie of Dante could be no more so stranger still is it to walk, not in spirit but in truth, beside the lake of Avernus! The little temple which stands on one side of this dismal lake, and which seems a disputed property between Proserpine and Pluto, is exquisitely picturesque exquisite in its solemn air of desolation and loneliness. . . . And strangely desolate, too, is the path on the opposite side, which leads to the Grotto of the Cumæan Sibyl. . . . In all this there is a mixture of fable and truth of

imagination and reality, that keeps one in a very singular state of excitement. I would willingly visit it again, and again, and again. I would like to look at that lake and temple, with the cheering influence of the early morning sun upon it, by the glowing light of a Neapolitan evening, and with all the mystery of light and shade that comes with the moon. I certainly saw it all, and I shall never forget it. . . . But I did not see it enough nor shall I feel satisfied till I can return to it. . . . I doubt, indeed, if I should ever be satisfied if I should ever lose the vague misty sensation that left me not, throughout this whole day, quite certain whether I was asleep or awake. The Grotto of the Sybil is a horror! I wish not to visit that again "drear, dark, and dread," it brings no mixed sensation which requires a minute or two to decide whether it be pain or pleasure. . . . The breathing is impeded, the light of the torches too imperfect to give even a clear idea of the forms around you, and I longed to find myself again beneath the light of day, that I might use my eyes in examining what was about me, instead of my hands, which in this Sibyl's grotto were by far the more intelligent agents of the two.

When we arrived at the excavations called the Sibyl's Baths, the ornamental mosaics of which still remain, and show plainly enough that these dark cavities have in truth been used as abiding places of some kind, we, that is, the three ladies of the

party, contented ourselves with peeping into them with the aid of such light as a torch could give, being informed that if we proceeded farther, it must be by mounting on the backs of our guides, as the inner apartments of the prophetess had a foot or two of water in them. The three gentlemen, however, placed themselves, as they were desired, upon the shoulders of the men, and in this manner penetrated to the very spot not only where the mystical Cumæan bathed herself but where she uttered the dark decrees of destiny. . . . Might not this lady have been one of the persons subject to that derangement of the nerves which we call mesmerism ?

While at Florence, during the scientific congress, I had recounted to me, by one of the most distinguished individuals present there, a series of wonders on this subject all occurring within the last thirty or forty years, and all in the southern part of Italy, which might render such a solution of her mysterious powers perfectly satisfactory to all but unbelievers. I do not mention the name of this gentleman, because he has himself never published any profession of faith on the subject ; but I found not that his words had less authority on this contested theme than on any other and no man, I think, ever spoke with more.

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On returning from the excavation of the Silyl,

which, if formed for her especial accommodation, proves her to have stood high in the esteem of the amiable hero who was the master spirit of all the wonderful *travaux forcés* performed in that region, we returned along the borders of the Tartarian lake, and once more admired the solitary little temple on its banks. The whole of this scene still looks dismal and desolate, though far from being altogether without beauty, or rather without *charm* ; but it has no longer the fatal qualities ascribed to it of yore . . . all of which, however, may easily be credited by those who take the trouble of informing themselves of the nature of the soil, and of the water in its neighbourhood. The violent volcanic movement which produced the Monte Nuovo could not fail of producing strong effects all round it, and among these may probably be reckoned the changing the current of the noxious effluvia which had previously rendered both the air and the water of the lake poisonous.

The walk from “the Stygian cave forlorn” to the place where we had left the carriage is but a short one ; and coming from Pozzuoli by the new road which leads to it renders all the troublesome boating, spoken of by Mrs. Starke, unnecessary. This same road now led us to the foot of the short but steep ascent leading to Nero’s Vapour Baths. Here the wiser portion of the company contented themselves by eating eggs cooked in the steam arising from them . . . but T——insisted

upon descending to the point where the vapour was strongest, and I shall never forget the appearance he exhibited on his return. He was more than pale, he was blue, and his face and features looked swollen, and almost distorted. If the baths were of the same temperature in the days of the imperial patient for whom they were formed as they are at present, it is to be regretted that he did not occasionally try the effect of this nether one . . . in which case we might never have been shown the spot where he received his mother Agrippina, when he was meditating her murder.

I cannot attempt to follow the order in which we visited all the wonderful and all the beautiful fragments of antiquity which remain at Baïæ and its vicinity. It has been called the Baden-Baden of the ancients ; but this gives no adequate idea of the splendour and luxury which reigned there in the days of its Roman glory. Besides the whole pantheon of beautiful temples with which the coast is serried, and the multitude of structures bearing the name of Nero, there are villas known as the summer residence of all the most distinguished names of Roman antiquity, and most of them having vestiges remaining of exceeding splendour. . . . Cicero had two of these luxurious palaces ; and the pleasantest feature left by these enduring records is the obvious mixture of talent and political power . . . of peaceful learning and military renown, which must have been found

among them. . . . Farther we cannot go, without finding, both from historic details and poetic allusions, so much of vice and corruption of all sorts, as might make one feel the terrific convulsions of Nature which have been at work among them to have been the merciful interference of Providence.

The three temples, bearing the names of Venus, Mercury, and Diana, are beautiful in their crumbling dignity, and still show symptoms of great elegance. . . . I could not, however, be comforted for the loss of the votive statues which at no very distant period still retained their places in the niches originally prepared for them, by being told that I should see them all in the museum at Naples.

The best preserved, though not the most beautiful relic of Roman greatness which remains on this coast, is the Piscina Mirabile; an enormous an almost incredibly enormous reservoir, that is said to have supplied the Misenum fleet with water. This is wonderfully grand, but wonderfully clumsy too. . . . I have heard wonder expressed because Robinson Crusoe did not contrive to make for himself a wheelbarrow; and I think the same feeling is produced at seeing such gigantic efforts made to do what might have been achieved with so much less difficulty.

But after following all these, and a hundred other traces of Greek and Roman art of wealth, of power, of elegance, and of luxury, which

in many respects we are struggling in vain to equal after all this has been gazed upon and wondered at, a treasure of antiquity remains infinitely better preserved, and, for that reason among others, infinitely more worth patient examination than all the rest. These are the tombs of Baiæ, which have already been discovered to spread over an extent of more than two miles in length, and which there is every reason to believe would be found to extend farther still, were the king of Naples to permit excavations to be continued in this direction. I certainly never found myself among any collection of objects that I felt to be so deeply interesting as these tombs. Innumerable museums may, indeed, be easily visited, each one of which may contain more finished specimens of ancient art than the very handsomest of these handsome tombs can show ; but it is the seeing them still preserving their place, and the purpose for which they were formed, that gives such heightened interest. Nothing that has been snatched by the rude irreverent hand of violence from the spot it was appointed to fill can produce an adequate effect, even though the ravishing hand may have been guided by the profoundest antiquarian learning in the world. It is evident, from the multitude of these tombs already discovered, and the many more which are well known to exist beneath the present surface of the soil, that Baiæ must have been something more than a mere

watering-place, the exceeding beauty of whose position tempted the great ones of the ancient world to lavish treasures by erecting splendid villas there. Between two and three miles of burying-ground could not have been required for this.

I do not often wish to be a king, but for about a year and a day I should like well enough to be king of Naples. The first thing I would do (after the necessary little job of giving the people a constitution) should be to set careful and experienced diggers to work upon every hillock on the coast of Baiæ. . . . How many Grecian statues, how many antique bronzes, how many ornaments of golden filagree, might be found, is of course uncertain ; but that an enormous extent of building would be laid open, is not so. It is impossible to thrust the stick of your parasol into the hill that rises on the right hand side of the road as you come from Naples, without its coming in contact with some fragment of a structure made with hands and were I living there, I verily believe I should be found at night, like the horrible lady of the eastern tale, grubbing in the earth with my nails, in order to make what had been too long buried revisit the glimpses of the moon.

The weather, which was very fine when we left Naples, had changed, by the time we set off to return, into something very like a storm, but without rain. The absence of this sort of shower-

bath, however, was very effectually supplied by the dashing surges of the Mediterranean, which burst in copious showers of spray, at more than one point of the road near Pozzuoli, and as our carriage was open we got enough of it.

* * * * *

The interest of the old world, that has left so many vestiges behind it, is so intensely strong at Naples as to "*metter in non cale*," almost every thing that appertains to the new. You can hardly imagine with what comparative indifference we have walked in and out of the churches, or driven through the crowded streets. . . . I cannot quite exclaim "What's this dull town to me?" . . . because decidedly it is any thing in the world rather than dull . . . but should any of my companions say to me, "Let us now talk a little like folks of this world," I must perforce decline the challenge, as my very heart and soul are groping about in another. You must not, therefore, expect that I should tell you very much about the city of Naples as it now stands . . . nor is it needful, for you know already that it is the most beautiful spot on earth . . . that it is very thickly populated . . . that the people eat great quantities of macaroni, when they can get it . . . that the citizens make coral trinkets and cheap gloves, and that the theatre is the largest in the world . . . you know all this already, and I know so very little more, though I do happen to

be here just at present, that it could be nothing but presumption if I were to attempt saying much about it. I would not beforehand have believed it possible that I could have ever learned to care so much more about things that are not than about things that are. . . . I flatter myself, however, that it is only a sort of paroxysm, a kind of climatic fever, that will pass away. . . . Or otherwise, when I return to the comfortable *top-dressing* of our newly-discovered little island, I shall be very badly off. . . . for if I take a distaste to its surface, I know of no buried treasures there that may console me. Little, however, as I seem to care about the streets, and the churches, and the palaces, I shall not desire absolutely to live underground, so long as I see such a glorious sky above me. . . . Yet we have had rainy weather here and the people call it cold. . . . But I have seen sunshine in the early mornings, that has mingled the grey with gold and felt a balmy air at midnight, as I stood out upon my balcony, which, despite the "bad weather," has given me a strange longing to pass the night there. But I am wrong to talk of a *grey* morning at Naples. . . . It may be black, perhaps, for storms will come, and the sea and sky are capable of joining together, and acting a very mournful tragedy, even here, as a wretched vessel thrown up, almost close by, can testify and then, I suppose, the heavens put on black, as is their custom upon all such occasions

.... but as to *grey*, *poor*, *pale*, *cold*, *earth-born-looking grey*, the heaven of Naples knows it not. It is upon a bank of violet that Apollo opens his eyes here when the weather is cloudy, and upon a tabernacle of sapphire, onyx, and sardine stone, when it is clear.

There is one building, however, at Naples, which, though neither under ground nor in ruins, is interesting even to me, professed antiquarian as I am become. The museum is so richly filled with antique treasures of almost every possible species, that not even the abominable confusion of its arrangement, which renders the catalogues sold at the door utterly useless, can prevent its being a treat of the very highest order. This collection is so immense that it requires many days to get through it, with even superficial attention; and to become really acquainted with its contents, would demand the labour of years. I did not particularly wish to examine the Pompeii and Herculaneum treasures till after I had visited the places from whence they were taken, and in some degree I adhered to this resolution; but as our days were too few to be passed idly, and as the expedition to Pompeii was not to take place till a thoroughly fine day, we agreed to examine the specimens of fresco painting which have been abstracted from the buried buildings, and also the statues, which have been formed into a truly magnificent collection from a variety of sources some few of

them being from the empty niches in the temples of Baiæ, whose nakedness I had so recently deplored.

Whatever our previous opinions might have been concerning the good taste or the liberality of those who had thus stripped the ruins we had seen, we confessed the propriety of what had been done as soon as we had looked a little about this magnificent result of it. The objects collected in this museum are much too precious, as works of art, to be left standing to abide unsheltered the blasts of the Mediterranean, in order to enhance the picturesque effect of the beautiful fragments on its shores, and so add to the sort of poetic dream into which they throw the spirit. They can do very well without this addition, and the statues they contained ought truly to be more safely lodged.

This Neapolitan collection of statues is calculated to create as much wonder as delight; and when the age of the world at the time they were executed is remembered, and also the adventures they have passed through the overthrowings, the buryings, and the diggings up their grace, their beauty, their unblenched majesty, as they still stand in proud array before us, has in it something so different from the history of all other human labour, that a feeling approaching to what a visible miracle might produce, is the consequence. Were there half-a-dozen statues as ex-

quisite as the half hundred or so that gave me the greatest delight, I might perhaps be beguiled into attempting some description of them but, as it is, the doing so is perfectly out of the question. . . . Methinks it were about as easy a task to sit down at Hammersmith and describe for you all the blossoms in the garden there.

What an art it is, this statue-making! and how very difficult for the idly-speculating mind of a common spectator to decide which entrances it most the mystery of stone, or of canvass! No, trust me, it is not for the sake of seeing the sun shine brightly, though that is something it is not for the sake of the rainbow-tinted climate, that it is wise and right to leave the tranquil ease or studious rest of home, and to climb the rude barrier of the frozen Alps. . . . The eye may be pleasantly regaled by what it gains after this climbing is over, and the lungs agreeably indulged; but the mind is not very greatly advanced or enlarged by it. No! It is to look on the astounding operations of ancient art that we should leave all, rather than die in ignorance of the power with which it pleased God in days of old to endow human hands. In these works alone does reality outdo the greatest possible stretch of expectation. It is almost as impossible to conceive such a figure as that of Aristides as to chisel it and not all the metaphysics in the world can teach us to do justice to the astonishing ability of man, till

these master-pieces from his hand have been looked at.

I should conceive that minds incapable of tracing the divine gift of *intellect* in the manner by which these magicians of antiquity embodied the thoughts, feelings, temper, and passions of their models, must fail also in catching the same essence in Shakspeare and in Dante. To look at a fine statue as the product of mere mechanical skill, is about as sublimely wise as looking at the universe and deeming it the result of chance. . . . But it is only in this country, it is only in this vast Italian museum of antique art, that the mind, after being first startled by one or two unimagined bits of perfection into wide awake attention to every thing that is brought before it, only then is it that all the intellectual strength and majesty of art grows apparent, and that we become conscious of that enormous power of communicating thought by a universal language which was possessed by the artists of old.

Nor is it difficult, perhaps, to catch a glimpse of light athwart the veil of mystery that envelopes the fall from what has been to what is. How did these highly gifted beings use their power? What was the worship aided by their hands? What were the rites their genius helped to sanctify? Not for this, was the talent trusted to their care, any more than Paradise was made to gratify the unbridled wishes of Eve ; and we have

no good cause to mourn the sweeping destruction by which the visible hand of God has in so many ways dashed from the earth their philosophy and their art (its too lovely hand-maiden) to make way for the diviner light in which we live. But there is no sin in looking at the samples so awfully overwhelmed, so wonderfully preserved, even by what seemed their destruction, and so curiously restored to light, as if on purpose to show us what power God *could* give to his creatures. There can be no more sin in looking with reverence upon these, than the eastern wanderer would feel if he could discover traces of the locality of the *first* lost Paradise.

LETTER XIII.

Pompeii. — The Mode of living easily discovered. — No Trace of domestic Comfort. — Substitutes of Bed-rooms. — Dinner in the Forum. — Proposal for an English Scavo. — Strong Impressions. — Grand Duke of Tuscany. — Anecdote of the King of Naples.

Naples, November, 1841.

THE sun of Naples has shone upon us, and we have, in company with a very pleasant party, passed our promised day at Pompeii, lounging amidst its wonders, and dining in the Forum, as if it had been May, instead of November.

If it could have been possible to have enclosed a little portion of this exhumed city not one of its mighty temples, but one of its very small dwellings if it could have been possible to do this, so as to have protected it from injury of all kinds from without, leaving, as much as could be, in statu quo every thing found within it the domestic utensils, the ladies' ornaments, the statues and in short the household goods of all sorts, it would have made a very precious addition to the treasures of Pompeii. But if for some reason, which I do not very well conceive, this could *not* be done, then every thing is exactly as it should

be all the minuter details of this ghostly history being carefully deposited in the museum ; whilst all that can be preserved of its walls and its pavements is guarded on the spot where they stand with an attention that may secure for ages what is left provided Vesuvius does not again stretch out his red right arm far enough to destroy it.

In nothing has my ignorance led me wider astray in every idea I had formed beforehand, than in the case of Pompeii. I had fancied a (comparatively speaking) small excavation, to which we were probably to descend by steps. But, instead of this, a gate was opened to us which led into an enclosure on a level with the road without and on first entering this, my impatient spirit experienced a grievous disappointment. There were fragments of walls ; but they were pretty nearly like the beginning of creation, — without form and void. I had presently, however, the satisfaction of observing that the man who was about to accompany us as guide seemed to prepare himself for a long walk. He told us, when he saw the preparations for dinner taken from the carriage, that the favourite place for dining was at a considerable distance, and that we must engage a couple of men to convey the baskets thither adding, that we should reach it in about a couple of hours, which he presumed would be as early as we should wish to dine. To

all this we agreed ; and I began to take comfort from the conviction that we could not be led about for two hours amidst Roman ruins, without seeing something better worth looking at than the first glance had shown us.

My alarm indeed, lest there should not be enough to see, was exceedingly unfounded ; for of all the walks I ever took, this was decidedly the most pregnant in interest and till somebody or other will be kind enough to make a *scavo* to the extent of another mile or two, I can never hope for such another. If I wanted a practical lesson to guard me from the folly of attempting to convey to you any idea of this extraordinary place by description, I should find it in the result of the abortive effort I made, before coming here, to learn something about it myself by reading. All I gained by it was the filling my head with a multitude of notions as far unlike as possible to all I found, and having nothing to recommend them save their vagueness, which certainly prevented the false impressions from being very profound.

I may tell you *en grand*, however, that the sort of excitement produced by being able to wander thus through streets, and into dwellings, whose latest inhabitants were antique Romans, is strangely delightful, and the whole spectacle infinitely more redolent of all we have read of this proud, voluptuous, artificial race, than I had expected to find it. It is so easy too, from the very similar ar-

range of all the dwellings, however different in size and stateliness, to follow their manner and style of existence. Before the first two hours' walk was ended I felt possessed of an immensity of classic knowledge, not of words, but of things. No wonder the race are so rarely represented as having any of those dear domestic qualities which make even the littlenesses of human life amiable! The very smallest of their dwellings shows much more preparation for public receiving, and display, than for home comforts; and as for the quiet, I might almost call it the sacred retreat, that all classes possessing the decencies of life enjoy in modern days, namely, the portion of a dwelling called a *bed-room*, it evidently came not into their calculation of necessities. In place of these we see cells,—decorated indeed, but still cells,—having no ventilation, or light either, save by means of the door, and greatly more resembling the state rooms of a packet boat than any thing else. How many *negatives* does this single circumstance carry with it! How many hours of solitary *refinement*, impossible to find elsewhere, do women pass in their boudoir or their bed-rooms! The young especially, before they have become mistress of a mansion, in which they may have power to select any other retreat that they may call their “own” *par excellence*, how could they enjoy the solitary reading that makes so immensely important a part of female education! I could not help picturing to myself

a family of daughters, packed round the court allotted for the purpose, and peeping out of their *cubicule* at each other. We should make a miserably bad exchange, methinks, were we to give up "my ladies' chamber" for a few fine temples and a majestic forum. . . . But pretty must it have been, exceedingly, when the social hour arrived, and the guests, assembled in the cool *trichinium*, enjoyed, even in the narrow streets of a close-packed city, all the freshness of flowers and of fountains, the grace of statues, and the gay brilliance of fresco decorations.

I wonder where the ladies were during the lazy, lounging, epicurean suppers? Oh! if the king of Naples would but have the exceeding kindness to order a *scavo* of half a mile square, and let the English pay for it and manage it, I feel confident that in the course of about six months after the permission was given we should have, first, a very perfect, uninjurious, and skilful clearing away of all that covers and encumbers the treasures we want to get at next, that we should see every individual article, both great and small, carefully deposited (the rubbish surrounding it being removed) exactly in the spot and the position in which the lava first, and then the English workmen, found it and lastly, we should see, rising above exactly the richest spot of our purchased half mile, a large and lofty edifice in wood and stone, with as many windows in the roof and walls as a grape-house

(only that there should be no favour shown to the sunny side), into which we could enter as freely, and see as perfectly, as we do now in the open street of Pompeii. Just imagine the delight of this! Statues in their places tables, sofas, stools, as the lava found them traces of female usefulness in one place, and masculine enjoyment in another. . . . Oh! fancy it all, and say if half an hour spent within our house of glass and wood would not bring us more graphically acquainted with the good folks of Pompeii, than all the museums in the world could make us?

Our dinner was sublime. Temples and columns on every side of us and all that the courteous caterer of the Victoria Hôtel thought best for *un diner sur l'herbe* in the foreground I know not, however, if through the whole day I enjoyed any moments so keenly as those which preceded our again setting off on our rambles While the gentlemen, and the guide, and the guide's men, managed the packings and the payings, and the sendings, I made my way over marble ruins into the rough wild open space beyond the enclosure of the Forum, and, mounted upon an isolated hillock, looked out upon the sea, THE mountain, the lava-fretted plain, and the unnumbered relics of art, of wealth, and of poor helpless human greatness of all kinds It cannot be described but the effect of the whole scene, as I looked upon it thus alone, was appalling. And the hillock itself that

gave the vantage ground on which I stood how I longed to know what slept below ! That it was *not* the solid earth was as certain as that I stood upon the site of Pompeii, and I *knew* that about fifteen feet beneath me were chambers crowded with all the familiar indications of busy life, exactly as they stood above seventeen hundred years ago ! So near, and yet so widely distant from me ! Those few solitary moments seemed to give me the very essence of a visit to Pompeii, and they left an impression that can never be effaced. When I again entered the magnificent area of the Forum, the party had all left it, and its crowd of broken columns looked like so many ghosts grimly frowning at me for my presumption in thus coming in solitary boldness into the midst of them It wanted but a very little more of excitement to make me fairly take to my heels, and run in pursuit of my companions. Fortunately, however, for my self-possession, I soon caught sight of some waving white drapery on the steps of a temple at no very great distance ; and not fancying that the *revenants* of Pompeii would be likely to appear in so snowy-tinted a costume, I felt no scruple in approaching it. — Now again, then, we set off to visit all the most remarkable objects that we had still left unseen. But could a single day effect this ? Surely not. Pompeii is one of the scenes in which I feel inclined to envy men. They can come, and they

can go, with so much greater facility such little, or such no preparation suffices to bring them out, and to take them home, that they need rarely feel that painful emotion arising from the consciousness that what they look upon with interest can hardly by possibility be looked upon again. *They* may come again if they will !

Is there, I wonder, any other spot of earth capable of producing impressions equally strong with Pompeii ?

“ Why should this desert silent be ?

For it is unpeopled ? No.

Tongues I ’ll hang on every stone.”

And tongues do speak here as dead tongues never spoke before. . . . The streets with the impression of carriage wheels still visible upon them the commodious fountain wherever four streets meet the well-used curb-stone, against which the ear almost fancies it can catch the grating of a Roman chariot wheel the oil shop the baker’s shop the startling “ *cave cane* ” at the poet’s door all bring dead days to life again, with a power almost as mysterious as that which brought back Saul.

But it is time to say farewell to Pompeii I would fain hope that I might visit it again. But if I do, I shall be no better inclined then than now to say “ For ever fare thee well ! ”

In returning from the theatre, which is at a distant part of the city, and to reach which you have to walk over a mile or so of as yet unopened streets, we met the Grand Duke of Tuscany, accompanied by two or three gentlemen; one of whom appeared to hold a plan or map in his hand, and the illustrious visitor seemed to be examining every thing with the most lively curiosity. His royal highness was in deep mourning for his fair young daughter, the news of whose death followed us to Venice almost immediately after the breaking up of the scientific congress. His royal highness has come to Naples with the grand duchess on a visit to her royal brother of Naples; and the *on dit* was, that the absence of the king and queen in Sicily has been a great disappointment to their royal relatives. Another *on dit* states that the reason for this prolonged absence is a vow made by the King of Naples a week or two ago, in a moment when himself and his queen were in great peril at sea, in consequence of his having insisted upon endeavouring to reach Palermo when the captain of the vessel they were in declared the attempt to be very dangerous. "Son io!" is said to have been the answer of his majesty to this remonstrance; and the storm which followed produced a penitentiary vow, that if the ships reached the port of Palermo in safety, a certain number of prayers should be offered at some particular shrine there.

We were greatly amused by the startled aspect of our guide when we mentioned who the gentleman was in a white hat with black crape round it. He did not for a moment appear to doubt our assertion; but that the Grand Duke of Tuscany should be there, with so total an absence of every thing like state and ceremony, seemed to astound him.

* * * * *

To-morrow we intend to revisit the museum, for the especial purpose of examining all the domestic articles abstracted from the dwellings we have this day visited this being the nearest approach we can make to the vainly wished-for pleasure of seeing them on the spot where they were found.

What a blessing it is that the majestic tombs of the Pompeii magnates are too massive to be put into the museum! These at least remain where they were placed by the hands that reared them.

LETTER XIV.

Repeated Visit to the Museum. — Magnificence of the Collection. — Want of a Catalogue. — Want of Interest in the City at large. — Agreeable Society. — Elegant Amusements. — Beautiful Excursions. — Delicious Climate. — Reverse of the Medal. — Tremendous Ignorance. — Education the only Cure for all the Evils complained of at Naples. — Anecdote of the King. — Visit to Herculaneum. — Proposals for a Joint Stock Company of different Nations to lay it open. — Palace at Portici. — Extract from the Album of Vesuvius. — Strada Nuova. — Caserta. — Pain of Leave-taking.

Naples, November, 1841.

OUR researches have been made quite in the right order. The delightful collection of pots and crocks, spades, casseroles, lamps, scales, padlocks, water-pails, cups, tongs, decanters, spinning spindles, lanterns, bodkins, egg-boilers, surgical instruments, combs, hair-pins, rouge, musical instruments, and hundreds of other articles that I cannot enumerate, together with several very satisfactory lumps of *dow* ready for the oven . . . all these would have been looked at with infinitely less interest, had we not so recently visited the dwellings where they were found.

Of this incomparable museum it is impossible to speak with sufficient admiration. The rarity

and intrinsic value of the objects (some of the finest cameos and intaglios in the world being among them); the manner in which they were found; the incredible richness of the statue galleries; the charming field for patient and learned research furnished by the countless rolls of half-burnt manuscripts; the unequalled mosaics; the admirable morsels of fresco; the collection of vases so far beyond all price; to say nothing of the pictures, among which are many that are excellent, — altogether form an assemblage of precious objects not to be paralleled in the world. Were there but a well-arranged catalogue, it would be perfect. For the sake of this gallery we did repeatedly submit to the necessity of turning away from the brilliant and graceful Chiaja, and submit to be driven through the unattractive streets, or rather street of Naples; for though the distance from the Chiatamone to the Museum is considerable, the long strada Toledo reaches nearly the whole way. But were it not for this royal museum, I believe we should scarcely have entered the city at all. Surely, of all the cities in the world, Naples is at once the ugliest and the most beautiful . . . the fairest and the foulest. I can hardly persuade myself that we are abiding in a capital, said to contain three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, so wondrously little do we see or know of their abodes. If we drive to the palace of the Capo di Monte, or climb to any other elevation, we may

certainly convince ourselves that a very considerable mass of buildings covers the steep acclivity between the summit of these heights and the blue sea at their feet and this is pretty nearly all that any body seems to know of the large and populous city of Naples. I do not mean literally to say that we have entered no churches, or that we have failed to visit the royal library, or the old catacombs, or the *coral shops* ; but as to driving about, as you do in all other cities, to look at squares and streets for their own sake, you do no such thing. I might, perhaps, be tempted to suppose that our delight in the surpassing beauty of the region immediately around the hôtel where we are lodged had made us voluntary prisoners to it, did I not find the following passage in our faithful guide, Mrs. Starkie : — “ The only parts of this city calculated to arrest the attention of foreigners are the Strada Nuovo, Toledo, the Largo del Palozzo, Santa Lucia, the Chiatamone, and the Chiaja.” This is most perfectly true ; and as the few points here enumerated all lie very closely together, it is evident that “ the attention of foreigners ” cannot be given to the major part of the dwellings, which contain above three hundred thousand souls. Even when standing in the most advantageous spot of the gardens at the Capo di Monte, you not only look over, but most completely overlook the mass of buildings below it, in order to regale your eyes with objects perfectly distinct from them, and that

form a picture which that unerring judge called "all the world" declares to be unrivalled. The brightness of this picture must be seen before it can be dreamed of; and then, I trust, it may be often dreamed of without being seen. To minds possessing the faculty of enjoying the goods the gods provide them, without making any inquiries about what is passing next door, Naples must seem a paradise any thing more perfect than the arrangements made here for enjoyment cannot easily be imagined. By the kind offices of Lady S——, to whom an introduction from a highly valued common friend immediately made us known, we were at once launched into the small but very brilliant circle that constitutes the *beau monde* of Naples. If it were larger, it would be less delightful if it were smaller, it would be less brilliant. The Accademia, where the aristocracy of the town receive every Monday evening during the winter *en hôtes*, is a most happy specimen of what well-managed subscription rooms may be, but so seldom are. Sufficiently spacious for all the purposes of the pleasant meeting, yet not large enough to make a small assemblage feel forlorn; well ventilated, well warmed, well carpeted; splendidly lighted; with good music, and good tea "What can I say more?" as Agi Baba asks us. It is possible, certainly, that my *entrée* there being made under the auspices of one who was not only very charming herself, but who

was surrounded by every body else who was very charming in the elegant circle, may have made me see every thing through a medium *tout soit peu couleur de rose*; nevertheless, I do truly believe the Accademia at Naples to be one of the best-arranged meetings of the kind that can be met with any where. Of the San Carlo theatre it is superfluous to say any thing, as its reputation is too widely spread to need it. It was in the box of the same amiable personage that I repeatedly enjoyed the delight of its perfect orchestra. . . . On one occasion, the birthday of the queen-mother, I had the advantage of seeing it brilliantly illuminated; the effect of which, though greatly less dazzling, was infinitely more splendid, both as to colour as well as size, than that of the Pergola at Florence, which I saw illuminated on the fête of Don Giovanni, and which, from the dazzling white of the panels, so nearly blinded me, that I was obliged to leave the house after looking round it for a very few minutes. There is also a good French troop of vaudeville performers in the town; and dinners as splendid as heart can wish cheer every afternoon, and very elegant parties enliven every evening; while the morning brings rides and drives, by the incomparable Strada Nuova, Baia, et cætera, through an atmosphere that has all the fragrant softness of summer without its heat I think I may venture to say without danger of being accused of exaggeration, that Naples is the most delightful

spot to pass the winter in that any part of the yet known world can furnish. But that the medal, as I have before observed, has a reverse, is but too true. Those who cannot be contented to float down the sunny side of a stream without looking on the objects of disgust which may be nestling in the shade beneath its banks on the other, may possibly not find Naples the paradise which it appears to those who can. . . . The moral, the political, the Christian philosopher, if he opens his eyes beyond the brilliant precincts enumerated by Mrs. Starkie, cannot fail to see much that will shock his eyes and pain his heart.

The manner in which the beautiful Chiaja and its gay inhabitants literally turn the back upon the rest of the city, seems to be a pretty fair type of the actual state of the population. That individual charity exists, and on an extended scale, *I know*; but not only may it be asked "What is that among so many?" . . . observations of much deeper import might be made to show that although individual charity must here, as elsewhere, be doubly blessed, by blessing those that give and those that take, it can *do nothing* towards remedying the tremendous evils under which this country of *high capacity* is suffering. Were education freely, thoroughly, and judiciously accorded to all classes, and were the bridle so uselessly and with such inconceivable short-sightedness now put upon

human intellect removed, all other evils would very speedily remedy themselves.

That ignorance is the mother, father, and universal progenitor of all sin, and of all misery, is as certain as the sun is the source of light Of this, I believe, nobody that thinks at all is any longer in doubt; and it is therefore a very sad and sorry sight, to see a populous race of highly intelligent beings sunk into a state of such wonderfully profound mental darkness. How long this is to last it is impossible to guess but there is something in it too repugnant to the natural order of even earthly ordinances, to permit our believing that it will be for ever.

We hear so much that is kind and amiable of the King of Naples, that it is difficult to believe he would refuse consent to such a scheme of national instruction as is now going on in Prussia, if the subject were fairly brought before him. A multitude of stories are told of him, all tending to show his strong dislike to personal oppression, and his wish to relieve even the guilty from punishment rather than inflict it with severity It is said, indeed, that so great is his well-known averseness to exacting the extremest penalty of the law *in any case*, that instances are known of ruffians who have delayed the perpetration of crime till the near approach of some fête or festival the anniversary of a birth, or any other public cause of jubilee in order that they may benefit by the

royal clemency, so freely extended at all such periods. They say, too, that on an occasion when the royal enjoyment of the most delicious drive and ride in Naples, as well as that of all the aristocracy, was greatly compromised, the good-humoured indulgence of the king forbade all remedy. At the point where the Villa Reale garden ends, the fishermen, and their washerwomen relations, convert the space beyond into as unsightly an exhibition of rags as can well be imagined. This being very loudly complained of, was at last remedied; and the pretty spot, commanding the finest open view of the sea, promised speedily to become every thing that the eye of taste could desire. But the very first time His Majesty took a ride in that direction, a multitude of men, women, and children threw themselves on the ground before his horses' feet, imploring him to give back to their use the spot where they had so long been used to sit in the sun, surrounded by their very peculiar belongings. The king could not resist the appeal; they were permitted to repossess themselves of the spot, which is again become as great a nuisance as ever.

It can hardly be doubted that such a temper as this would yield consent to any measure that could be plainly shown to be advantageous to the people, for whom he feels so much kindness; and could an enlightened system of education be universally established throughout the country, a very few

years would see the end of all the evils of which people now complain but without it, not all the struggles in the world, whether plebeian or patrician, will avail.

* * * * *

The expedition to Herculaneum is far less productive of pleasure than that to Pompeii, though of interest and astonishment there are good store. But not only do you grope in utter darkness through places that you would give the world to see by the very broadest light of day, but your temper is tried by your being aware that if it were not for the little palace of Portici, and a portion of the little town, something as magnificent as the temples of Pompeii, or even more so, might be laid open. Partial as the excavations here have hitherto been, the treasures of art, as well as those in precious metals, which have been already discovered, make it a matter of the very deepest astonishment to me, that a scientific, systematic, joint-stock company sort of an undertaking is not entered upon, to purchase the buildings and the land for a few miles round, and to lay open this venerable city in much better style than the same work has ever been done elsewhere. That the mere manual labour would be more severe, and in consequence more costly, on account both of the greater depth and harder substance of the mass to be worked through, seems but a slight objection to the undertaking, when it is so certain that the government of

Naples might *lease* the affair, at a very nobly remunerating price, to a few of the great nations of the earth. Methinks that, both nationally and individually, Great Britain would become a tolerably large subscriber the notion of getting a few such statues as those of the Balbi, father and son, being a tolerably strong incentive. Proud Russia, too, would not be far behind ; and France, for the sake of name, fame, honour, and glory, could not leave it to be thought that she would do any thing to obtain statues, save paying for them honestly. And then America would decidedly become a subscriber, for Greenough and Power are beginning to make her understand what marble is good for. Holland loves a little speculation ; Austria, whatever is noble ; Prussia, whatever is intellectual. . . . If the Celestial Empire should happen to have any body left alive within it, at the time the scheme opens, they will scold lustily if they are left out of it ; and Belgium will be proud to do a little, and Hanover too, rather than lose this chance of a great prize. . . . Nay, I think it extremely probable that the settlers in Australia, who are making such galloping advances towards elegance, will choose to have something to do with it.

By way of raising a fund for the sake of paying a little interest upon the first deposits, before the large final profits can come in, the curious should be taxed at the rate of five shillings each for being permitted to enter, and look at the works ; and I

wonder how many thousands would repair to Naples yearly for the sole purpose of seeing how the works get on? When the miners got upon a statue, a farther fee of twenty shillings should be charged upon the descent. . . . Oh! we should grow rich upon it! And the magnificent galleries we should fill would only be a part of our profits. . . . But all this is for the future. For this present year we were obliged to content ourselves with a very dark, damp, dank, dismal expedition into the theatre at Herculaneum. . . . the dimensions of which may suffice to convince the most timid of speculators that the city which required it must be well worth sacking. . . . As for the English, indeed, the success of their part of the enterprise would be quite certain. Just imagine what profit we should make by the sale of steam engines, and *all other tools*, of which our own warehouses would of course be the exporters.

As we could not, however, immediately begin pulling the palace down, we condescended to go in and see it, and a pretty little palace it is, from its beautiful sea front, with Sorrento and the lovely coast bending round to it in full view, and its pretty well-shaded garden, and its admirable mosaic floors, and its rococo little saloon of porcelain. . . . With all its prettiness, however, it has not the appearance of being frequently inhabited.

* * * * *

The great uncertainty of the weather, which,

though every day giving us some portion of bright sunshine, rarely fails to give us some showers of rain also, has made me abandon the idea of getting up Vesuvius. The ascent is always fatiguing, and in wet and slippery weather particularly so ; and moreover there is now so very little to be seen when you get there, except the view, which other elevations command as well, that I felt little temptation to join the gentlemen of our party who performed the excursion yesterday. My son, who is a persevering cragsman, got more into, and up, and down the diminished crater than I should have ventured to do ; but the present state of the mountain is very quiescent, the smoke rising unceasingly, but without violence. From the book of names kept at the hermitage T—— copied the following passage, dated 1835 : —

“ I wrote to Naples to say that I proposed visiting it, and, as I did not care for the expense, I wished an eruption to be prepared for me. But on arriving at Naples I found that the letter had never arrived, and as it would take a week to boil up an eruption, I have been obliged to forego the pleasure.

“ MRS. TROLLOPE,

Writer of travels in America.”

This “ fathers itself,” methinks.

* * * * *

The favourite drive at Naples, and probably the loveliest drive in the world, is the Strada Nuova, but

it should be taken in the evening. It is only when the glorious sun of Naples is behind us that we can bear to look upon the effulgence that he sheds ; and therefore it is when returning from an evening drive along the Strada Nuova that the surpassing beauty of the bay on the south-eastern side is seen to the greatest advantage. You can then take in the whole sweep of the Chiaja, with the towering mysteries of the picturesque town rising behind it which, whether handsome or ugly, clean or the contrary, as you pass along its streets, shows excellently well, tier above tier, when looked at thus, at a becoming distance. The Castello dell' Uovo, the Castello Nuovo, and the whole line of buildings towards Portici, lead the eye along the elegant curve of the shore, their brilliant whiteness delightfully contrasted with the deep blue of the Mediterranean, and having Vesuvius, Castellamare, and the heights stretching towards Sorrento, as a background while Ischia, like a bit of mosaic set in lapis lazuli, catches the sunbeams on a white dwelling or two, just enough to make you know that the lonely-looking island is inhabited. The line of coast along which runs this magnificent road is perfectly crowded with interesting historical fragments of buildings, sometimes still showing a dark outline that tells you they are the work of man, and sometimes being sunk so nearly to the level of the rocks on which they stand that it is difficult at a little distance to discover which is

which. At one or two points these storied fragments have been very happily seized upon to assist the decoration of the fairy gardens that hang over the sea, as if to view themselves in its bright mirror. One of these points is now, I believe, in the tasteful hands of Lady S——; and I question not that ere it has long been hers, one of the fairest bits of enchantment will arise there that this land of magic can show. Another of these favoured spots has already been converted into a little rocky museum, that calls itself the Villa dell' Rocca Romana. The view from the balcony of a little sea-girt temple in these grounds, when seen at the same favouring hour of evening, must, I think, in its way be perfectly unequalled.

* * * *

Every body told us that it was absolutely necessary to see the magnificent palace of the Caserta, and the prodigious aqueduct which supplies it with water, and therefore, although it took one whole precious day to do it, we obeyed, and set off on the 23d of November with a very pleasant party of English friends to take this long drive in open carriages, and to eat a pin-nic dinner sur l'herb. In any other climate, especially after repeated rains, such a project would have spoken very little in favour of our discretion; but the doing it here showed us all to be possessed of that admirable faculty of judging according to circumstances, which is the best preventive against all kinds of

blundering. Nothing could be more agreeable than our expedition ; its only defect, indeed, arose from its being too agreeable, for we lingered through the whole course of it so pleasantly, that when we arrived at the enormous palace at last we had not light enough left to see its apartments.

The more usual way, I believe, of making this excursion is by taking the palace first, and driving home by the road that affords a view of the aqueduct ; but, notwithstanding the chance of doing exactly as we did, and thereby losing a sight of the regal chambers, I would recommend all "felicity hunters" to visit the aqueduct first for not only is this wonderful fabric, with its triple tier of arches, most truly worthy of being examined both with light and leisure, but the views caught from the upper line of it, and from the road which afterwards takes you to St. Lucia, are peculiarly interesting. Nevertheless, it is nothing more than a perfect contrast to the bright beauty that we left behind us at Naples the landscape is wide and wild, richly wooded and prettily dotted with habitations in one direction, but showing a wide range of the most black and arid-looking Apennines in another. I should be tempted to suspect that there were hot springs under the pale, dry, herbless surface of these hills ; for I have repeatedly remarked an aspect exactly similar where it was so.

As no carriage (excepting a king sits in it) can be permitted to drive along the top of the aqueduct,

we of course walked over it ; and it is well worth while to continue the walk thus begun up the side of the green hill round which the carriages have to climb, in order to enjoy the abundant growth of myrtle that is indigenous there, and in greater profusion than I have ever seen it any where else though near Genoa it grows wild and freely.

The silk-looms of St. Lucia are certainly more nobly lodged than any other looms in the world ; the buildings which contain them have perfectly the air of a palace, and the view from various parts of them is superb. The trees and shrubs are of the very highest beauty, and not even in Pennsylvania did I ever see magnolias so splendid. The bright scarlet seeds hung thick upon them, and set off the luxuriant foliage even more than their splendid blossoms could do.

It was upon the fine terrace of St. Lucia that our dinner was spread, the experienced servants who attended us being aware that all things needful for the repast could be obtained from the establishment ; and a beautiful fountain of delicious water, filling a graceful marble receiver, at no great distance, pointed out the exact place for our dinner table, with an authority that could not be disputed and when seated round it, did we any of us remember by what a dreary name the month was called whose sweet breath now fluttered round us ? If we did, it certainly suggested no thoughts either of hanging or drowning but we drank

the health of the Prince of Wales, of whose arrival we had just heard, in bumpers that had no mixture from our fountain in them and then the idlers amused themselves among the flowery walks of this manufacturing Paradise, while a young lady of the party made an admirable sketch from the difficult bird's-eye view that spread itself before the terrace and then we set off to walk through a mile or two of garden to Caserta.

The waters brought by the aqueduct for use are very skilfully converted into ornament as you approach the palace, forming a succession of pretty cascades that are profusely adorned with statues, which reminded us of the princely state and style of Versailles ; and it is by the side of the magnificent reservoir into which these cascades fall that the broad gravel path is formed which leads to the garden front of the palace. The structure is both graceful and imposing, from its great extent and regularity ; and the entrance to it, under the fine arcade that leads through the palace to the principal front, is very noble so is the staircase, so is the marble vestibule at the top of it and this is all we saw of the palace, for the light was rapidly sinking into darkness when we reached it. We had, however, enjoyed our day too much to feel any regrets about the distribution of it, and returned to Naples in very good humour with those who sent us.

Yet notwithstanding the spring-tide mildness of

this Neapolitan November, there is enough of that agreeable sort of dissipation going on which smooths the roughness even of rough weather, and leaves one often in doubt whether the “summer sun” or the “social hours” eulogised in the old rhyme* ought to have the preference. . . . A splendid dinner party at the mansion of our amiable minister several equally elegant at that of Lady S——, with one or two others, all assembling very delightful little circles, have already shown us plainly enough that a winter might be very agreeably passed here. Almost the only drawback, I think, to the vivid pleasures of a twelvemonth’s touring through a new and interesting country is the necessity it brings with it of breaking up many a pleasant acquaintance almost as soon as it is formed. It often happens in quitting a place that taking leave levies a penalty upon the feelings, which seems like a tax upon all the pleasure you have enjoyed while staying there and Naples just at present, “with all the goodly people in it,” as Miranda says, could not be left without our being conscious of this but the deed was to be done, and —

“Noi passammo oltre, ed io, e ’l Duca mio.”

*

With us alike each season suits.

The Spring hath fragrant flowers ;

The Summer, sun ; the Autumn, fruits ;

The Winter, social hours.

LETTER XV.

Comparison between Naples and Rome.—Domestic Arrangements.—Michael Angelo's Moses.—The Apollo.—The Tower of the Capitol.—Necessity of walking instead of driving over the *Via Sacra*, and among the Ruins in its Neighbourhood.—St. Peter's.—Difficulty of keeping clear of it.

Rome, December, 1841.

I SCARCELY know how to class Naples and Rome relatively to each other, in respect to the interest they inspire. It is not, as in many other cases, a question of beauty; it is seldom difficult to decide between any two places as to which pleases the eye best; and were that the question now, I could not hesitate for a moment, as I think Naples not only more beautiful to look at than Rome, but very decidedly more beautiful than any other place I have ever seen. The doubt I feel is respecting the moral and historic interest of the two. Both stand alone in the world, and both bear records of the same important race, which has, more or less, left its influence upon the whole of the civilised portion of the earth. But yet, though in many cases the very individuals whose traces we are so strangely able to follow are the same, they come upon the mind very differently. At Rome, the local changes that have taken place since *Cæsar* died and Antony mourned for him, are neither

greater nor less than reason and old-world experience might lead us to expect. We have but to look at the massive sturdiness of Adrian's tomb, to understand why it stands there still; while the fact that a papal fortress has taken the liberty of rearing itself above it, is not at all more surprising than that Pope Gregory XVI. walks and talks to-day where a high-priest of Giove Tonante walked and talked in days of yore; nor is there any natural shrinking of the mind from the idea that it is possible that first great step may, even now, be leading the way to another: all this may be thought and felt at Rome, but not so at Naples. There the mind is carried back two thousand years, or near it, at one great leap. It has no stepping-stones to rest upon, no gradual fall and rising again, that history enables us to follow, through all the sequence and dependency of thing on thing, which, while it teaches us to comprehend what we see, prevents us from being astonished at. But at Baiæ, Pompeii, Herculaneum, and their great receiver-general the museum at Naples, all is wonder, and every thing we look at creates astonishment. There is something singularly sublime in the idea, that a stupendous convulsion of Nature, which seemed only calculated to destroy, should so mysteriously have been the means of preservation. . . . It has, in fact, preserved what, in its minute familiar details, takes us back over this enormous chasm of time to

the very hearths and homes of the people, whom at Rome we can only look at through the long perspective of years which divides their day from ours; and this has in it something so unprecedented and extraordinary, that it is not easy to recover from the effect which it produces. The question of comparative interest, however, does not end here; if it did . . . if antiquarian research, and nothing else, were to settle it, Naples would outdo Rome in this as decidedly as in beauty. But it is the later history of Rome that gives it such surpassing impressiveness, and which produces as much enjoyment to a thinking mind as strong exercise does to an active body. . . . There are (besides a thousand lesser ones) three great epochs of the world's history that are here palpably displayed, and distinctly visible to the eye both of body and soul.

The proud and vigorous power of imperial Rome, its wretched worship, and its vain cravings for earthly immortality, so legible throughout all its mighty works, is one magnificent and pregnant page. . . . Then turn the leaf, and read, in characters of marble and enduring brass, how all this enormous power was extinguished to make way for a revelation from the throne of God . . . not granted till poor blundering man most showed his need of it, by the darkness visible to which all his unhelped light of human genius had led him; and which was taught at length by the voices of a few

humble fishermen. . . . Forget for a moment the human errors that have crept in amongst it. . . . and it is a glorious and stupendous spectacle to behold how this first pure spark of heaven-sent truth rose into a blaze of light that put out all the twinklings of philosophy, as the sun puts out the stars. . . . It is glorious to see the church of St. Peter stand in the circus of Nero it is glorious to trace the growing greatness of the universal Christian metropolis, and to see the blood-proud Romans, and all their deified brutalities, trampled in the dust. . . . This is another page, but it is not the last. . . . St. Peter's stands unshaken, and, it may be, shall stand as long as the solid foundations of the earth endure. . . . It is THE CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL, built over the grave of him whom Christ commanded to preach his word, and not all the earth-born blunders of the Vatican can prevent Christians from feeling that it is a CHRISTIAN TEMPLE. . . . But the stability of St. Peter's is no type of the condition of Rome and blind must be the eyes which do not see this. . . . Enough is already written on this latter page to engage the attention of those who love to speculate . . . but it is not finished yet.

* * * * *

Having settled ourselves in comfortable apartments in the Via Babuino, engaged a carriage and a *well-certificated* servant for the time we intended to remain in Rome, our first care was to send out

our cards and letters, and our next to begin seeing . . . every thing. Our reverence for the name of Michael Angelo caused us to make the first of our sight-seeing visits to St. Pietro in Vincolo, where his Moses sits —

— “enthroned in awful state.”

The position and general aspect of the figure could only have been conceived by genius of the first order. . . . It requires neither ghost nor artist to tell us this. . . . But . . . oh! the presumptuous *but!* . . . the flowing beard, exquisitely as it flows, still flows preposterously; nor can I in my ignorance conceive why the right arm of a figure sitting in such sublime repose should have the muscles developed like those of a blacksmith in strong action. The head is glorious. Were not this majestic figure of a kind that, like the sun, prevents those who gaze upon it from seeing any thing else, I should, I believe, have thought the church in which it presides extremely beautiful . . . for even now I remember thinking that there was a something very striking in its columns.

I know not why it was that we did not at the very first possible moment betake ourselves to that particular corner of the Vatican where we well knew the Apollo Belvidere was waiting for us. It certainly was not because he was forgotten, but rather with the feeling of hoarding what they long for, which those wise folks display who turn a letter this way and that way in their hands, for

minutes before they open it. . . . But this sort of coquetting with our impatience came to an end ere long, and "*All' Vaticano!*" was the order of the hour. In route we met an enthusiastic friend, who got into the carriage, and accompanied us; and his commands, that we should look neither to the right hand nor to the left, as he hurried us along the noble gallery, agreed tolerably well with our own inclinations; and yet there seemed something ungracious and irreverent in hurrying on thus, passing gods and demi-gods without vouchsafing to give them a single glance. I shall never forget the solemn accent of our servant a most excellent *valet de place*, who, I observe, never permits us to enter any where without him I shall never forget the accent with which he said, pointing to the door of the little tribune as we approached it "*Ecco la prima statua dell' mondo!*" One might have fancied, from the swelling pride which seemed to animate him, that the wonder was the work of his own hand.

The friend who conducted me let go my arm as we passed through this almost awful door, and then silently stood by, without tormenting either my companion or myself with any questionings of "how we liked it?" Woe be to those who act the cicerone at this spot in any other way! To be asked how one likes the Belvidere Apollo, during the first moments of beholding it, might

try the philosophy of the calmest Stoic that ever lived.

This statue, however, requires no lengthened study to bring its power upon the mind though the effect is rather too strong to make talking agreeable. . . . Grace, beauty, dignity, and power, stand before you in all the immortality of marble, but without its coldness. The noble creature pauses, and therefore moves not; but difficult is it to believe that those proud speaking features will remain thus proudly still for ever. . . . Are there more such statues hidden in the bowels of the earth? And will they remain there till we are buried under it?

It would not, I imagine, be easy for any one to talk when looking at this statue for the first time; and truly, when I spoke at last, it was in borrowed phrase. . . . How many British gazers besides myself, I wonder, have found infinite relief under the same circumstances, in using the words of Milman, instead of their own?

“ In settled majesty of calm disdain
Proud of his might, yet scornful of the slain,
The heavenly archer stands.”

The whole description is most eloquently happy, and conveys, as nearly as any words can do, an idea of the mingled majesty and grace of this peerless statue. The line,

“ Too fair to worship, too divine to love,”

is admirable. . . . This statue is one of the very few things that cannot be over-praised. I conceive it to be impossible that any thing which may have been previously said of it could lead to disappointment.

In returning through the gallery, we did the statues the great injustice of looking at them. I have returned to them again since, and in a humour to acknowledge this injustice ; but it must be some time after seeing the Apollo Belvidere before any other work of man can produce a very strong effect upon the feelings.

We felt this so very strongly, that we decided upon avoiding all such sights as the Transfiguration, et cætera, for a day or two, and drove about, and made visits, and joined rendezvous of carriages on the Pincio, instead of it. Not only is this drive on Mont Pincio, by the way, a proper thing to do for the sake of seeing a morning assemblage of the beau monde of Rome, but it is absolutely necessary to go there, and to one or two other elevated points both in and near the city, in order to obtain some general idea of the relative position of the different parts of it. Without this, you may read volumes concerning ancient and modern Rome, without having the blessing of a single definite idea left upon your mind respecting the situation of either. It was for the sake of obtaining this advantage, at full leisure, as well as for that of avoiding the chefs

d'œuvre of the Capitol, that our first visit was not to the inside, but the outside of it. From the top of the tower of the Capitol, with a good map in your hand, and an intelligent guide by your side, a very comprehensive, nay, a very accurate idea may be formed of the most interesting part of ancient Rome. . . . And assuredly it is difficult to conceive any scene more impressive than that which is spread immediately beneath your eye, as you stand upon this commanding elevation. The Coliseum directly before you. . . . The arches of . . . but I will not go on. . . . If standing on the spot I have named, you will not want such a catalogue of the objects below as I can give . . . and at a distance from it, all such enumerations are worse than useless, they are tormenting. All I can say that can be of any use is, that I earnestly advise your taking care to find yourself on the top of the tower of the Capitol with as little delay as possible, after reaching Rome.

It is after standing there deliberately for an hour or so, that it will profit you to ramble among the rich congeries of antique monuments, in the midst of which you find yourself on descending the hill towards the Coliseum. But dismiss your carriage during this ramble, if you have any real wish to enjoy it. I have tried both ways . . . and though I now know the ground ("Via Sacra" it may well be called), though I now know it all pretty well by heart, I would not consent to be

dragged again about any of the interval which divides the Capitol from the Coliseum for more than I will say. Let your carriage wait for you on the top of the Capitol hill. Roman carriages are used to waiting; and both in going and returning every step of the space I have mentioned should be walked over deliberately again and again, with your map and with your guide.

In mounting to the highest accessible points of the Coliseum, too, the view of the objects near it is most glorious, . . . so is it from the Farnese gardens. . . . From each of these elevations the noble features combine themselves differently; and though I mounted at various times very perseveringly in different directions, I never found any two views that were not so charmingly unlike, even though many of the objects composing them are the same, that I would on no account have missed one, because I had seen the rest.

But though I have scribbled all this down, *de suite*, do not imagine that ancient Rome can be seen in a day . . . many of these *pictures* from the heights may indeed be looked at, one after another . . . but the entering into detailed examinations is quite a different thing; and in this there should be no hurrying. I shall never feel sent back to ages past by the columns and pediments of ancient Rome, as I did by the shop-counters, the oil-jars, and the ovens of Pompeii . . . but there is ma-

jesty, dignity, historic interest, and positive beauty here, that makes Rome, if

“ Non è più come era prima,”

more worth coming far to see than any other place, I imagine, in the world always excepting Naples.

The driving about Rome, I mean actually in the streets, and not merely the environs, is a much more agreeable business than driving about Naples; for though the poor here are quite as dirty, and less picturesque, they seem rather less generally diffused, and make a smaller proportion of the general street population. But the great difference is, that at Naples, if you turn away from the brilliant Chiaja, its Villa Reale garden, the blue sea, that always seems full dressed to meet you, with the gems that border it, and the island jewels that rest upon its bosom, if you turn away from this, there is nothing more of bright or beautiful to meet the eye but at Rome, turn your horses' heads in what direction you will, and you cannot go on for five minutes without coming upon something, either ancient or modern, that enchants the eye and sets the mind to work. On the miserable filth which mixes itself so universally with the splendour, and which gives to the whole city the air of a pietra dura bedded in mud, which has been left to dry as it may, on the edges of all the columns, temples, and palaces of which it is composed on all this

it is needful, as much as possible, to close the eyes, and another organ of sense also.

The only place in Rome, outside the drawing-room doors, that is really clean, is St. Peter's. From the majestic portico to the ball, that seems to have lifted itself on a cloud, it is perfectly, beautifully free from every trace of that abounding filth, which in every other quarter of the city appears to struggle with magnificence, leaving it often doubtful which is the more distinguishing feature. The number of persons incessantly employed in thus preserving the sacred tabernacle is stated to be so enormous that I am afraid to repeat the number; but they are lost in its immensity, for fewer persons so employed have attracted my attention at St. Peter's than at many other tolerably well kept churches I know. The daily expenses of the church and Vatican gallery are said to amount to 1000 crowns; and I have heard, but on worse authority, a much larger sum stated. There is nothing perhaps, when the attention is directed to it, that conveys a stronger idea of the vastness of this matchless edifice, than the manner in which human figures seem lost in it. There are not many days that we do not contrive to go there at the hour of vespers, when a beautiful service is performed before the canons in the elegant choral chapel, and a great many persons, particularly from among the English residents, resort to it at the same hour . . . and yet I could never perceive that their presence

produced any visible effect on the solemn stillness and vast solitude that reigns there. If you meet a party of friends close to the chapel door you may see and speak to them, but if either party moves on for a moment or two, they are lost again, as a floating atom, visible for a moment, and then gone. I am quite certain that if I were a Roman Catholic I should believe some miraculous influence rested upon this edifice, it is in all things so utterly unlike every thing else in the world. The mind loses all power of judgment there ; but the faculties you lose are merged in ecstasy. The eye ceases to measure distance, but revels in immensity of space all that is most gorgeous in colours blends into one vast harmony ; and the very air is something special and apart, for be it cold or be it hot without, you breathe beneath that magic dome the delicious mildness of eternal spring.

I never thought I should live to prefer a Grecian to a Gothic cathedral, but the time is come. St. Peter's is to the eye what the finest of Handel's choruses are to the ear a multitude of harmonies blended into one. Beauty, sublimity, grace, strength, holiness, and joy, all seize upon the soul, and produce a "measureless content," such as I never felt before.

It is truly said that comparisons are odious, but it is exceedingly difficult to keep clear of them ; and thus, while one day standing beneath the dome of St. Peter's, the fair Magdelaine of Paris rose be-

fore me. *Without*, it is indeed all grace, all loveliness; but unhappily my fancy at that moment gave me the view within, and the very thought of it, as I stood amidst the noble company of marble saints, and beneath the springing vault that rose above them, gave me the sensation of falling from heaven to earth.

How I have just now got back to St. Peter's I do not well know I thought that I was going to talk to you a little about the relics of old Rome but this is exactly one instance of the sort of mysterious power belonging to the mighty Basilica which touches upon the miraculous. . . . If we set off upon a long morning expedition, wherein there is an immense deal to do, and no thoughts of even crossing the bridge of St. Angelo making a part of it, we are almost sure, some how or other, to find ourselves at St. Peter's before we get home again. . . . If we begin discoursing of the Pantheon, we are sure, before many minutes, to find it absolutely necessary, in order to explain what we mean, to talk a little about St. Peter's; and now, when I had no idea of writing a word on the subject, I find myself in the midst of it.

LETTER XVI.

Agreeable English Society in Rome.—Roman Conversazionis.—Influence of the Cardinals.—Their high State.—The Sistine Chapel.—The Chaunt.—Frescoes of Michael Angelo.—Difficulty of seeing them well.—Homage of the Cardinals.—Conduct of a Party of young English Ladies.—Offensive Manners exhibited by the Second-rate Class of English Travellers on the Continent.—Indecent Conduct during the Papal Mass at St. Peter's.—The Borghese and Doria Palaces.—The Farnesina Palace.—The Corsini.—The Sciana.—The Tomb of the Borghese, and its splendid Chapel.—St. John Lateran.—St. Ignatius.—The Fountains.

Rome, December, 1841.

WE have found an extremely pleasant circle of English society here ; perhaps, for sojourners, who have so much to do, and so little time to do it in, it is *too* pleasant, for we have more than once been tempted to give up an Italian saloon for an English one. In truth, I feel conscious that I am not profiting as much as I might by the introductions with which I have been favoured to one or two distinguished persons here. In morning visits I have had the opportunity of conversing with several Roman gentlemen, among whom I have found the very highest intelligence and the noblest tone of feeling ; and were I established here, with the power of receiving, I can conceive nothing more delightful than cultivating the ac-

quaintance of such persons, and endeavouring to establish such a degree of intimacy as might lead to free discussion of every kind. There is a tone of deep feeling, a justness of thought, a depth of acquirement, in more than one individual whom I have met here, that creates the strongest possible desire to know more of them but it is very difficult. Again and again the precious opportunities for the conversation I so greatly value have been lost by our being from home in quest of pictures and statues, and without the power of receiving company at dinner that best of conversation intervals, which comes in so pleasantly between the sight-seeing of the morning and the dissipation of the evening. . . . Without this power, it is, I think, very difficult for sojourners at Rome to cultivate the acquaintance they would most value. As to the evening parties among the noble Romans, I must confess that I think all enjoyment from them is very greatly destroyed by the sort of state with which it is the custom to receive the cardinals. The venerable college make much too considerable a part of the Roman aristocracy, for this sort of stiff ceremony to be without a pretty strong degree of paralysing effect upon the Romans themselves, but to Protestant strangers it is generally more so. It appears to me, that the whole arrangement of the company is affected by their presence, which, nevertheless, is absolutely necessary for a *salon*

comme il faut. The ladies seat themselves at the upper end of the saloon, while the gentlemen, red and violet stockings included, circulate in the lower part of it, conversing among themselves, often playing cards, but for the most part taking apparently very little heed of the fair personages permitted to be in their presence. Meanwhile the ladies converse in whispers, and certainly with as little appearance of animation or enjoyment as it is possible to imagine. The moment a cardinal approaches them they rise up, as if it were a sovereign; the only difference being, that whereas a sovereign desires the ladies he addresses to reseat themselves, the cardinals very rarely do any such thing and the affect of this upon the circle may easily be imagined. When this sort of old-fashioned, awkward, rococo etiquette is moreover considered a symptom of piety, and where any relaxation of it in a stranger would be held to be an offensive acknowledgment of heresy, the matter becomes serious rendering a Roman *conversazione* very far from being amusing. On one occasion, when we had been, for a long-seeming half hour or so, enduring the tedium of this high solemnity, we took courage, having the very pleasant drawing-room of Sir Frederic and Lady A—— before our eyes, to make an early exit; and on reaching the anti-room, I was considerably startled to see it, large though it was, half filled with lace-covered *laquais*, in the most pompous

state liveries imaginable. While in the act of tying on my cloak, one of the red-stockings dignataries we had left in the salon came forth; upon which three of the liveried train marshalled themselves behind him, while two of the domestics of the house preceded him down stairs to his carriage, which he mounted, looking for all the world like a state prisoner. This species of cumbrous state is never, I understand, laid aside. Among the Mon-signoris, I have been introduced to one or two very intelligent and agreeable men, who appear by no means to consider themselves as set apart in the same sublime style as the cardinals, though they have a few little etiquettes among them, too, that are amusing to those not to "the manner born." Within a few years of the present time the mansion of a cardinal was the scene of some of the most splendid parties in Rome . . . but nothing of the kind is going on at present, his Holiness not approving it.

* * * * *

We have been attending high mass at the Sistine Chapel, partly to see the Pope, partly to hear the peculiar unaccompanied old chaunts performed there, and partly to have leisure to look at the frescos of Michael Angelo more at ease than we have been yet able to do. To dispatch the last first, I would by no means recommend the same experiment to any one anxious to study these interesting works, for it requires the very best light in which it is possible to put yourself, in order to

see them at all ; and on this occasion, instead of seeing them better, we saw them worse than ever. . . . The effect of the ceiling, when you are seated and look up to it, is that of a shower of legs and arms, which seem ready to fall upon you ; and the admirable depth of their relief so increases this effect as to make the spectacle rather terrific than beautiful. Of the singing I can only say, that it is accounted very learned, and so difficult, that when a voice is lost from the choir, it is very often found impossible to replace it. All this I can readily believe. But did any *savant* in music tell me that it was pleasing, I should find it less easy to receive his judgment.

I cannot say that I was greatly edified by the peculiar ceremonies of this Papal worship (I speak as a heretic), but I could not admire or approve the disproportion which seemed to exist between the time bestowed on prayer, and that devoted to the homage offered by each cardinal to the Pope. But though I did not feel the service to be very religiously impressive, I was exceedingly disgusted, and not a little ashamed, at the conduct of a party of English young ladies, who sat immediately before me. Their chatter was incessant, and their laughter nearly equally so. When the cardinals, who pass into the chapel close by the ladies' tribune, began to arrive, my fair countrywomen at first proclaimed aloud that each one that entered was the Pope . . . and "Look at him ! Look at him !"

ran through the disorderly line. . . . Then one among them having brightly discovered that, as they could not be all Popes, the real Pope could not be come yet, they amused themselves by instituting a scrutiny on the physical peculiarities of the whole college. One keen-looking little body exclaimed aloud, as one of the purple host passed by, "Oh! what a sharp little bird of a man!" a phrase so aptly descriptive of the individual of whom she spoke, that, with all my indignation, I could scarcely help laughing, for never did man look more like a gay-plumaged bird than the beak-nosed little cardinal in question but the commentary went on, without even aptness to recommend it, till the cardinals being all at rest in their places, the lively ladies were driven to observations on the Swiss guard for amusement and, "is not that one handsome?" and, "does'nt that one's hat become him?" followed, till I felt so very heartily ashamed, that I had the greatest possible inclination to get up, and run away.

The general character of English travellers certainly does not stand high on the Continent, but no where has it ever appeared to me so bad as at Rome. I have long been convinced, that the cause why we hear, throughout France, Germany, and Italy, so many unpleasant observations on what are called our *national peculiarities*, arises from the fact, that the respectable class of travellers I mean such as are of good education, and good

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breeding, pass through these countries, and through all the scenes of public resort in which they may chance to mix, so quietly as not to attract any notice whatever, and therefore the best amongst us cannot act as a balance weight against the worst, because the ordinary observers, who are precisely the people that raise the cry against us, know nothing whatever about them while those, who every year scramble abroad for a few weeks, instead of spending their money at Margate or Brighton, have no joy equal to that of drawing all eyes upon them, and account their consequence to be in exact proportion to the astonishment they excite. Did the industry of other nations reap as ample a remuneration as the industry of our own, foreigners would better understand the possibility of an inferior class of persons leaving their own country from curiosity, to see other lands ; but it never enters their heads that this is possible. . . . Every traveller from Great Britian is dubbed *Milor Anglais*, and the boutiquier is, from sheer ignorance, confounded with the gentleman.

But there is one complaint specially made against us at Rome, which reached me from so many, and such trustworthy sources, that I have but little hope that it is even exaggerated I allude to the indecorums repeatedly committed by the English here during the solemnities of Easter. It is well known that the travelling gold of England is a resource of very considerable importance to the citi-

zens of Rome, and a patriotic wish on the part of the authorities to encourage by all means the arrival of such opulent strangers has induced them to grant the most courteous facilities for their entrance and accommodation at all the high solemnities of the Church. A *frightful* variety of anecdotes has reached me, relative to the manner in which these facilities have been abused. During the Easter week, of, I think, the last year, a scene of this kind occurred at St. Peter's, which sounds quite as offensive to Protestant as to Popish ears, and which must have arisen among persons incapable of feeling religious reverence in any country, though it is probable they never had an equally conspicuous manner of displaying it in their own. There is a moment during the performance of every Papal Mass, when the host is elevated by the Pope himself a few notes from a trumpet announce this moment, as the tinkling of a bell does on more ordinary occasions, and the assembled multitude fall on the pavement. . . . Princes and people, the plummy crest of the soldier, and the monk's cowl, all are bent low together, and some seconds of solemn silence follow. . . . Exactly at this moment was it, that the rapt worshippers of a faith having the same holy origin as our own were startled by the popping of champagne corks, in one of the tribunals prepared for the English! Authority did not interfere at that moment there was no authority at leisure to notice it all were alike engaged in prostra-

tion before the present God. . . . But the impression left upon the minds of the Roman people was a very deep one. I have been told that the *Propaganda*, as the reverend court of Cardinals and Bishops is called, discussed the propriety of issuing an edict forbidding the admission of English heretics from all church ceremonies for the future, but that it was negatived by the majority, from the consciousness that such a measure would very seriously affect the pecuniary interest of a large portion of the citizens. . . . The whole of this history was extremely painful to me, and the more so, from the temperate and Christian-like manner in which I heard it related.

* * * * *

We have been to see the noble galleries of the Borghese and the Doria palaces which, less than a year ago, were the splendid homes of two noble English sisters. There was much in this to gratify our national pride. The noblest patricians of Rome selected their brides from among the noble ladies of Britain nor was the choice made in the wanton spirit of inconsiderate liking . . . of Roman faith, and of answering station, these two lovely sisters were transplanted hither, as fair and noble scions of an ancient house, whose hereditary creed had already allied them, in some sort, to Rome. . . . "But, oh, the heavy change!" . . . One of these beautiful and most amiable women is no more! Never, I believe, was a loss more sin-

cerely deplored ; it is never alluded to but with a feeling of sorrow that appears as general as sincere.

Assuredly no foreign brides were ever taken to more splendid dwellings. . . . The Colonna palace, of all I have seen, exceeds them in magnificence. The *Columna flecti nescio*, the well-known motto of the race, may still show itself here ; for, excepting in a few royal palaces, I have never seen any room so gorgeous, and every way superb, as the grand gallery of the Colonna. . . . Of the Doria and Borghese galleries it were idle to speak. . . . Who is there that knows them not, either by sight or reputation ? The landscapes at the Doria palace render the collection unlike any other I have seen in Italy ; for, in general, first-rate landscapes are rare, in proportion to the abounding richness of other departments ; but I know of no gallery in any country which can show as many noble landscapes as that of Prince Doria. THE Salvator is transcendant but Salvator may be seen, too, at Florence, in pretty tolerable perfection but not so either Claude Lorraine, Gasper Poussin, Breughel, or Both. The favourite Raphael, at the Borghese palace, cannot, by possibility, be looked at enough by any passing travellers. I wonder how many tête-à-tête interviews one might have with it before all its beauty was discovered ?

Need I tell you that all the palaces in Rome, to which, if you consult a well-accomplished valet de place, you will unquestionably be led, contain more

or less of marbles and of pictures, rich and rare ; any one of which collections might, elsewhere, have a separate and peculiar fame, that it would look like deepest ignorance to merge in any other? . . . But here any attempt to rehearse them would be like counting the sand on the sea-shore. The Palazzo Farnesina is precious from the Galatea of Raphael, and also by the outline of a head, that looks as if it were sketched in chalk, and which is held sacred as the work of Michael Angelo, who having, as it is said, come to visit Raphael while at work there, and found him absent, mounted the scaffolding, and sketched this bold outline, of considerably larger dimensions than any in the decorations of Raphael, desiring he might be told that he thought he was working on too small a scale. . . . When the frescoes which adorn the apartment were well-nigh finished, one of Raphael's scholars inquired if he should prepare the compartment in which Michael Angelo had made his sketch, for the composition with which he presumed his master was about to fill it ; but Raphael commanded him to leave it untouched, declaring that he would never efface a line drawn by the hand of Michael Angelo. This anecdote is so well sustained by the evidence of the strangely unfinished panel, that it would be difficult not to believe it.

The Corsini palace is rich in all ways the collection of pictures is superb but the palace seems almost forsaken by the family, which pos-

sesses another very noble mansion at Florence, that now appears to be their favourite residence . . . but notwithstanding some singularly beautiful specimens of the very best manner of Carlo Dolci, at the Florentine Palace, I think the pictures here so very much finer, that I marvel how they can be forsaken.

The small Sciana collection is one of the most agreeable in Rome, — first, because it contains much that is of first-rate excellence, — secondly, because the light is very good, — and thirdly, because the number of pictures is so moderate, that you can fully enjoy them all without fatigue. There is a Leonardo da Vinci here that is exquisite . . . and so are the two Guidos. How terribly little have we in England of this last-named artist that does him *full* justice! . . . The famous fresco Sibyls of Raphael in the church of Santa Maria delle Pace would have satisfied me better, had I not heard or read that the Sibylline prophetess was in the act of predicting the birth of our Saviour. This had made me anticipate a greater sublimity of expression than I found . . . but, as a fresco, the work is wonderful, and, as a composition, adapted to the arch over which it is placed, it is an admirable *tour de force*.

The frescoes of Dominichino in the church of St. Andreano delle Valle (said to have been built over the spot where Cæsar was stabbed) are full of interest . . . and so also is Landfranco's cupola.

The antique Ionic pillars in St. Maria Maggiore are most gracious and impressive, notwithstanding that the roof seems to press too closely on them. The Borghese chapel in this church is reckoned the richest in Rome, and it certainly would not be easy to conceive a more perfect or costly museum of all that is most precious in stones and marbles. A large circlet of precious jewels surmounts the case containing the elements; and jasper, agate, onyx, porphyry, malachite, and every other species of fine marble that ever was heard of, form the columns, and the entire lining of the beautiful walls. One delicate bit of *recherche* in the finishing struck me. . . . Wherever the construction of the altar, or any other panelling, seemed to require the introduction of wood, for the setting of it, the appearance of this too ordinary material is supplied by the most exquisite specimens of it in petrification. The sculptures and jointings of the dome are rich and elaborate; the floor exquisite, and the whole enclosure has an air of complete and finished magnificence, such as is seldom seen. It was but the day before that we had visited the stately palace of the same noble race . . . and now we were examining their tomb! . . . In each it was impossible not to remember, and mourn, the fate of our fair and noble country-woman, so early doomed to rest, unconscious of the splendour of her jewelled tomb!

It is not from many points that my eye acknow-

ledges the greatly vaunted beauty of the Campagna. . . . To me it almost always seemed to speak more of desolation than of beauty. But the portion of it which stretches forth before the portico of St. John of Lateran, with its outline of mountains, and its speaking lines of antique aqueducts, is very beautiful. The colour in which these distant mountains show themselves, though it varies day by day, and almost hour by hour, is always lovely ; and the whole scene has a sort of graphic peculiarity about it that tells you very eloquently where you are. The Corsini family have a very fine chapel in this magnificent church, and though less splendid in its ornamental details than that of Prince Borghese in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, is, perhaps, even superior to it in general gracefulness of effect. Another gorgeous family mausoleum will soon be completed here, sacred to the family of Torlonia, not quite so ancient a race, but one that bids fair to rival, both in the acquirement of wealth, and its liberal expenditure, the mercantile regalities of the Medici, and all the splendours of the Cinque cento. . . . I am told that the chapel preparing for this family in the church of St. John Lateran is to be as magnificent as it is possible for money to make it.

This enormous basilica is one of the many edifices in Rome in which, while the eyes are very richly regaled, the mind is not permitted to have a single instant's repose, being sent backwards and for-

wards, like a shuttlecock between the battledores, while following the cicerone in his notices of what belongs to Antique and to Christian Rome. There is here a magnificent collection of marble relics, unequalled columns, — nay, even statues, that claim a high antiquity; but their present office, and their past history, jumble themselves together into almost inextricable confusion. Yet I would not counsel any one to seek relief from this by neglecting any of the precious objects thus heterogeneously pointed out, for it would be difficult to name any one of them which one might not lament, if left unseen. The baptistry, also, is interesting in the very highest degree. It is called, *par excellence*, the baptistry of Constantine; but Constantine, as all the world knows, was the founder of the mighty basilic itself, which is styled, as we were told, the “Mater et Caput” of all Christian basilics. Perhaps the reason, however, why his name is particularly given to the baptistry, is, that it is said to stand precisely on the spot where he himself received the sacrament of baptism. The old porphyry pillars here are perfectly stupendous.

The pretty portico of the Santa Scala is another of the ornaments which decorate the thrice holy area which surrounds San Giovavni in Laterano. The twenty-eight steps which rise between its columns are said to be those ascended by our Saviour when going before Pilate. The multitude of pious pil-

grims who come to ascend these steps upon their knees is stated to be prodigiously great ; and as a proof that this statement is not exaggerated, we were shown a stout casing of wood, with which it has been found necessary to cover the steps in order to preserve them from the millions of knees which yearly pass over them.

I shall not soon forget the look of scorn with which the cicerone regarded us when we uttered some trifling words of exclamation, which perhaps he took for incredulity. . . . If his lips did not say,

“ O creature sciocche,
Quanto ignoranza è quella ! ”

his eyes did.

A friend of ours, however, was in great danger of faring worse than we did, as not eyes, only, but hands were put in action in order to bring him to a sense of his heresy. This unfortunate young gentleman arrived in front of the elegant *Santa Scala*, totally ignorant of its sanctity, or of any reason whatever that should prevent his immediately galloping from the bottom to the top of it. . . . He, therefore, sprung forward, and had already attained what was about the centre stair, when he suddenly felt himself seized upon in the least ceremonious manner imaginable, and dragged to the bottom. A torrent of horror-struck indignation was then poured out upon him, to which he would willingly have lent an attentive ear, if he could

have understood a single word of it; but this was not in his power, being wholly unacquainted with the Italian language; and at last he was only made to comprehend the offence he had committed by a passing Englishman, who, pausing long enough to comprehend the scene, quickly said to his luckless countryman, "You have committed sacrilege . . . and had better give the *custode* a few pauls."

As of course it was absolutely necessary to visit the shrine of the great Jesuit, and behold his effigy above his tomb, wrought in solid silver, and bedecked with gems . . . not to mention the longest mass of lapis lazuli in the world, which surmounts the towering monument, as it was necessary to see all this, we took advantage of a day on which a grand musical ceremony was announced, "at once to regale both our eyes and" *our ears*. The silver statue of St. Ignatius we certainly saw, though on lesser days it is shrouded by a picture which is raised before it as a screen. . . . We saw, too, the lapis lazuli which is a lapidocian monster; but as to our ears, though the three organs of the church played with accompaniments alternately, and sometimes right merrily, we were neither edified by the solemnity of the strains, nor enchanted by their sweetness. However, we had the satisfaction of seeing the venerable queen mother of Sardinia walk up the aisle during the service, with sundry liveried poursuivants, to perform her devotions at the altar.

It is well worth while to devote an hour or two of morning driving to see all the finest fountains in Rome. These structures are a fitting and very magnificent embellishment for every city, uniting beauty and convenience more satisfactorily than can be found together in many of the works of man. I wish the powers that be would fill up the disagreeable vacuum in Trafalgar Square with a fountain as magnificent as that of Trevi which I venture to mention as a model, because, although beautiful and superb enough to delight every eye, it is not so perfect in taste but what we might hope to equal it which, perhaps, might not be the case if it were *quite* perfect, as perfection in ornamental architecture is not our *côté fort*.

LETTER XVII.

Disappointment in the Borghese Gardens.—Gardens of England.—Necessity of Scientific Cultivation every where. — The unwholesome Beauty of the Campagna.—The Pincio Hill.—View of Rome from the Terrace.—The English Church.—English Equipages.—Numerical Proportion of Priests.—Forests.—Crimes of Violence. State of Roman Morality.—The Statu Quo System.—Roman Catholic Sermon.—Roman Catholic Faith.

Rome, December, 1841.

WE passed a part of our morning yesterday in the Borghese gardens, which I had repeatedly heard mentioned as among the most beautiful in the neighbourhood of Rome; and when this is said of a “place of pleasure” belonging to a name of so much splendour, it naturally creates an expectation of something *very* beautiful. The palace of the Borghese, the chapel of the Borghese, both so pre-eminent in magnificence, suggested the idea of a garden as transcendant in loveliness as that of Aladdin, though not, perhaps, exactly in the same fashion. . . . But in all these calculations, I was very completely mistaken.

How singular it is that England, whose defective climate is the theme of such an enormous proportion of all foreign observation upon her peculiar and characteristic features, how singular it is that

the gardens of this poor, cold, and foggy England, should as much^r excel all others in every species of beauty, as in every species of produce. But so it is, beyond all reach of decently-plausible contradiction; and the consequence is, that it is very difficult for any of us, on being led into a garden on the Continent, to say, honestly, that we see any thing to admire in it. At Rome, however, where there is such an overflowing abundance of admirable objects, that almost the only drawback to enjoyment arises from the difficulty of seeing them all sufficiently, one feels perhaps less scruple than elsewhere in acknowledging the truth on this subject at once, and confessing, *sans façon*, that (except in the case of Mr. Mill's villa, and one or two more, where the view seen *from* the garden is too essentially Roman to care much for any thing else) the gardens of the Eternal City and its neighbourhood, are any thing rather than beautiful, or agreeable. The aspect of the Borghese garden is, from one end to the other of its very ample extent, so lamentably dank and damp, that I felt, as I drove through it, as if the air were peopled with gnomes, bearing about vials of malaria, which they were ready to pour upon the heads of all intruders and I was, in fact, told, upon inquiring as to the truth of my conjecture, that it was only at particular times of the year that these admired gardens could be resorted to with impunity.

I am quite willing to confess that the observa-

tion is a very trite one, but forgive me if I remark here, for about the hundred thousandth time that the thought has been expressed, *the blessings of nature are scattered abroad with very marvellous equality*. Here, there is a brightness of atmosphere that seems to show every object in full dress, clothing each landscape that we look upon in such heavenly hues, that the eye revels in a paradise of gorgeous colouring while with us, "a homely suit of russet grey" is very often the only robe that nature can afford to put on, for us; and true it is that we have frequently got to look at our lovely lawns and groves through a veil of mist, having no better ornament than here and there a trembling dew-drop, twinkling through it, as it hangs upon flower and tree. . . . But turn the medal, and you will see amidst the amber, jasper, topaz, and lapis lazuli of Rome the demon of disease, lurking where all seems fairest, and turning the air, that looks like an elixir extracted from diamonds and pearls, into a draught of venomous poison, and untimely death while the reverse of our humbler medal shows health and exercise, labour and its sweet reward, a paler sun, but a more ruddy cheek.

The only profitable portion, however, of such meditative comparisons must arise from observing the sure and certain mastery that science has power to give in almost every instance where climate and its adjuncts (soil and so forth) seem defective.

Where would be the rich crops of Holland and of Flanders, without deep draining here, and careful dressing there? Or where the rich manifold harvest of fair France, but for her unceasing industry? Of our own garden-land, that, despite of chilling mist, and clouded sun, pours forth upon us, in rich abundance, the most perfect fruits and flowers that the whole earth from end to end can show, of our own land, may we not say, that nature made England damp, and chill, and dim, on purpose to show what Englishmen could do to improve it? I believe perfectly that if the land in and around Rome were made to produce crops that should be carried off the ground three or four times in every year, for less than this would not suffice to relieve the teeming soil, a very few years would see the end of the malaria. It is curious to observe, in this Borghese garden, how the vilest mosses take place of every species of grass plant, on those spots intended to represent turf, while the magnificent luxuriance of some of the shrubs show how powerful and rank the strength of the vegetation is.

I cannot imagine how it happens that so many people look out on the wide-spreading Campagna of Rome, and call it beautiful, and seem enchanted, almost beyond the power of expression, because the glow of the ethereal vapour that seems to rest upon it is so exquisitely lovely! Did I not know that, but for the insane ignorance which pre-

vests the cultivation of this vast expanse, it would be giving bread to thousands, instead of poison to hundreds, I, too, should be well enough disposed to call it beautiful ; for it is impossible to be blind to the singular charm of this enchanting colouring. . . . But as it is, I never look upon it without feeling that it is the most awful desert that the eye can rest upon ; and not even the most squalid groups, that seem perishing in rags and wretchedness in the streets, both of Rome and Naples, give me so painful a conviction of the mischief which the blundering ordinances of men can produce, as do the lovely, loathsome plains of the violet-tinted Campagna.

From the Borghese Gardens we drove, as we do every now and then, and as fashionable people do every day, to the Pincio. This would be a promenade of unequalled beauty did not the fine folks here, as they very often do elsewhere, choose by far the least beautiful part of it for their eternal giro. The terrace walk that forms the noble level which meets the eye on mounting the steps for here, as in many other instances, it is the pedestrian who gets the best of the show, is one of the most interesting spots that it is possible to stand upon. When at the nearest point to this magnificent esplanade in our descent yesterday, we got out of the carriage, and as the slanting beams of a nearly setting sun illumined the whole city at our feet, I thought that I had

never before looked upon a scene so glorious. . . . How vast a portion of the history of the whole world seemed opened before our eyes as we thus looked down upon Rome, Pagan and Papiſtical St. Peter's towering in the distance, so pre-eminently, so unmistakeably the lord of all the castle of St. Angelo, with its imperial tomb, and Christian fortress over it the roof of the Pantheon here that of the Propaganda there rare morsels of antique edifices caught here and there, if carefully sought for (the rich region round the Capitol not being visible from the Pincio) while unnumbered and almost innumerable Christian basilicas, and towers, and domes, and pinnacles, showed like the crowded masts of an enormous fleet that had found safe anchorage amongst them. And if you know the spot at which to seek it extremely well, you might descry the building, under the roof of which, and *very near it*, the faithful of the English church are allowed by his Holiness to assemble themselves together for the purpose of offering their prayers to God according to their own ritual and belief. This un conspicuous building is outside the walls of Rome, but at no great distance from the Porta del Popolo. . . . Then, if we turn our eyes towards the steep ascent leading to the fashionable point of rendezvous upon the Pincio, we see a closely packed line of carriages reaching from its base to its summit, and if the question be

asked as each one passes up, "To whom does that equipage belong?" the answer will be such, if the person addressed be well skilled in such matters, as to show that the number of those which belong to the English bear about the same proportion to the number which belong to the Romans (or to the natives of any other country) as do the priests, that may be seen circulating in every direction among the company, to any other order or condition of men and that is as much as to say there are ten to one.

It is not one of the most agreeable features of these rides and walks about the region of the Pincio Hill, that coming or going we are almost sure to meet a gang of *forçats*, chained two and two together, in their way to or from some spot where, if I mistake not, the government is making a new *scavo*. These unfortunate wretches, whenever I have chanced to meet any of them, have always appeared more sick than sorrowful; being for the most part pale, hollow-eyed, and often exceedingly emaciated but having an easy lounging air of indifference, that contrasts strongly with the expression of almost every face that is turned towards them. I enquired of an Italian acquaintance the other day, for what species of crime this enforced labour in chains was inflicted. "Of what gang are you speaking?" he demanded "Of that employed in the buildings at St. Paul's?" "No," I replied;

“those I have the most frequently seen are on the Pincio.” “That gang, without any exception,” he returned, “have all been guilty of murder.” I shuddered.

“Does it frighten you?” said he, smiling. . . . “They are, as you may perceive, exceedingly well secured.”

“No!” said I “It was not any fears for my own safety that made me shudder, but it is very horrible to know that this fearful crime has been committed so frequently; and it must have been recently too, for I have remarked that almost all these chained labourers are quite young men.”

“Oh yes! It would not answer to employ old men in work that requires activity they would only impede the others. . . . But these young men that inspire you with so much horror, I do assure you that many of them are far from being so depraved as you seem to imagine. . . . It is very possible that not one amongst them is morally corrupt.”

“That is a very un-English doctrine,” I replied. “In our country we consider murder as the greatest proof of depravity that any human being can show; and so great is the odium attached to it, that I doubt if men convicted, as I presume these have been, of so hateful a crime, could be thus daily exposed to the gaze of their fellow citizens without incurring considerable personal danger from their hatred and indignation.”

"No shadow of any such feeling," he replied, "exists among us. . . . And yet I should be sorry," he continued, seeing, I suppose, that I looked rather horrified, "I should be very sorry to leave an impression upon your mind unfavourable to Roman virtue."

"I should have been very averse," said I, "to say of your countrymen what you have just said of them yourself. . . . but I presume I have not rightly understood you. I am sure you cannot mean to assert seriously, that no shadow of indignation exists among the Roman people of the nineteenth century against murderers?"

"The manner in which the crime was committed must surely make a difference with you, as well as with us," said he. "An act of cold-blooded deliberate cruelty would assuredly be met with feelings of indignation at Rome, as well as in London, but not a *mere act of violence*."

"Not if the mere act of violence goes the length of murder?" said I.

"No," he replied, without the slightest hesitation; "certainly not. The temperament of our people leads them to acts of violence, which the temperament of yours does not; and without any mixture of national partiality, I should be inclined to say that a murder committed by an Englishman was, in the sight of Heaven, a much worse crime than a murder committed by an Italian."

I felt that there was truth in this, and yet it

sounded strangely too ; and I could not help replying, with a feeling that was, perhaps, rather tinged too strongly with national partiality, " I think I must forgive the severity of your judgment upon our unfortunate murderers, in gratitude for the favourable opinion it implies of the rest of us for you clearly infer, that an Englishman descends more from the ordinary level of his morality by the commission of a murder than a Roman does."

" I not only infer it," he replied sturdily, " but I assert it. The whole class of crimes that come fairly under the denomination of *deeds of violence* may be, and are, committed by men in a much less deplorable state of moral degradation in our country than could possibly happen in yours ; and in this case, as in many others, the moral scale applied to the one, ought not, in common justice, to be graduated in the same manner as that applied to the other."

He suddenly stopped short ; and I felt that what he said was so perfectly true, that I did not choose to answer him not, however, because the avowal of what was passing in my mind might seem like confessing that we were more deserving of blame than our neighbours, but because I could not, as I thought, agree with him without assuming for my country a degree of moral superiority, which it was more civil in him to give than in me to take ; and so the conversation dropped. But however well we might agree as to the fact, that the moral

code of England was of a higher tone than that of some other lands, I am persuaded that we should agree not at all as to the cause of it. He would explain it wholly by the difference of organisation, while I should think the far more important difference lay in the enormous systematic *contrast*, I think I may call it, of English and Italian popular education. With us, to whatever extent this popular education may go, which, of course, varies greatly in degree according to circumstances but *whatever* the degree of advance may be, it is ever, and always, an advance towards truth; whereas here, most unhappily, if any education at all is accorded to the lower orders, it comes *of necessity* from those who are, perhaps, the least capable, but most certainly the least willing to bestow any thing but darkness. . . . Surely no temperament in the known world can be so likely to render any, and every sort of crime, of small importance, as the doctrine that all and every sort of crime can be fully and entirely atoned for, by receiving absolution, purchased either by penance or by pence (no matter which), from the priest.

It is far, oh ! very far from my meaning, to express the shadow of a belief that Italy possesses not as high, as pure, as noble characters as any nation upon earth. There is no truth that comes of human knowledge, of which I can be more convinced, than of the existence of many such. Nay, greatly as the present position of their country is

thought to be unfavourable to the development of a high tone of character, I truly believe, that in many cases it is contrary *only* to their enjoyment of life, but rather favourable than otherwise to the ripening of deep thought, profound sensibility, enduring resolution, and the high consciousness of superior powers, which circumstances doom them to bury in the silent recesses of their secret solitude, knowing that they have but to make visible the light that burns within them, in order to involve themselves, and those perhaps a thousand times dearer, in misfortunes that would only add to the general mass of suffering, without by possibility producing good to any. That such men are often "their own prodigious great reward," I do truly hope and believe and herein lies the only consolation that the case admits of.

It is not easy to believe that where such men as these exist the original material of the national character is as much below par as some modern generalisers would endeavour to make us think ; yet it is undeniable that the southern part of Italy, that is to say, all of Italy that is not either Lombard or Tuscan, displays at this moment an aspect of such striking inferiority to the rest of the civilised world in all that relates to popular industry, popular intelligence, popular morality, and popular comfort, that no honest observer can pass through it without becoming aware that it is inhabited by a race greatly *en arrière*, if not inferior. Of their

inferiority, however, I believe not one word; and I hear but of one other solution that can account for it.

So heartily do I detest and misdoubt the *doctrine* of revolution as a cure for any evil, that I shrink from hearing, and still more from uttering, any thing that can be construed into approving it; and it is fully as much from this feeling, as from any less general one, that I look with so much pain upon the national condition of this country. That it cannot continue, appears to me a fact so evidently certain, that nothing on the subject is left for conjecture but the time and the manner of the remedy. "Of the time knoweth no man;" but it would show great and very precious wisdom on the part of those who still have power, if they could so regulate the manner of it as to prevent its coming in the shape of that frightful deluge, a popular revolution. How far this is possible I cannot presume to judge; but it is exactly when one is most awake to the tremendous influence of a defective government in producing mischief, that one is likely to believe that a good one might have power to remove it. It is only, I think, those political experimentalists who do *not* dislike revolutions, but rather like to watch, and perhaps aid, them, as an anatomist, when watching the dissection of a dead body for the purpose of discovering the disease that sapped its life it is only such who could contemplate the present state of

southern Italy without wishing to see some speedy, but peaceable remedy applied to the evils that are destroying it.

Never, perhaps, did the every-day effects of bad government show themselves in such legible characters as at this moment in Rome. The daily and nightly outrages in the streets, which are increasing at no very slow rate, are met by edicts, put forth by the ecclesiastical police, in which every species of severity is threatened, and a scale of punishments that roars loud and threatens awfully in the index, and which has been committed to print and stuck up throughout the city, to be groaned over by the citizens and laughed at by the aggressors. . . . "Yes, catch them if you can, and then hang them," is a phrase that is in every mouth . . . while the utter and absolute impossibility of catching either an assassin or a thief, unless mounted soldiers should *happen* to be within reach, is as notorious to all parties as is the existence of the criminals.

We are a highly taxed country ; no such power and splendour as that of England can be created and sustained without high taxation ; but never at the most pinching moment of the last long war did any complaints against the burdens we had to endure approach to what, very greatly to my surprise, I have listened to here, and that from quarters pretty nearly as distinct from each other in all respects as possible. Yet, with all this, I

believe it is equally notorious that the exigencies of the state increase also not because their expences increase, but because their supplies diminish. One mode of meeting this increasing pressure is the redeeming the enormous tax upon houses, by which a present supply is obtained, but at such an expense of annual revenue as *must* be supplied ere long by new burdens, and where to place them is a question of enormous difficulty.

It would be more invidious than difficult to multiply instances demonstrative both of governmental weakness and oppression ; in truth, the only principle upon which they rest a hope of continued tranquility is that of being sustained by external bolstering in such a state of *statu quo* as shall render dissolution itself more possible than improvement. It is a melancholy process to watch, and that, perhaps, is the reason why so many seem to turn away their eyes from it.

When remembering what the power of Papistical Rome has been, and seeing what it is, the advance towards decay and destruction appears so obvious, and, during the last half century, so very rapid, that the most superficial observer must be led to wonder at the supine inertness with which those who should seem to hold authority go on, without attempting to set in action any revivifying principle that might renew energy and life. That they might say " We have no power in . . . ourselves to help ourselves," cannot be denied and that they do say it, I

very much believe but not exactly, or at least not wholly, in its most obvious sense. It is not only because they look to the powerful stranger for support (against themselves!) that they remain thus seemingly satisfied and tranquil, but because they do verily and indeed believe that their kingdom is not only of this world or, rather, that their kingdom in this world, as well as in the next, does not rest upon human strength to sustain it. That no sincere Roman Catholic doubts that it is divine authority which sits in the chair of St. Peter is certain; and it therefore follows that, as long as any sincere Roman Catholics continue to exist, a faith undoubting in the maintenance of this authority must exist too. It is this, probably, which enables them to watch the decay of all political power with apparent indifference, and which leads them to think it more likely that Great Britain, by the assistance of Mr. O'Connell, shall become Papist, and throw her treasure and her strength into the lap of Rome, than that any earthly power, either from within or without, should permanently overwhelm her.

I heard, a day or two ago (on the anniversary of St. Thomas à Becket) a very striking sermon from the learned and amiable principal of the English Roman Catholic college here. This sermon was for the most part so truly Catholic, that in describing it I might very safely leave out the word Roman, save for the latter part of it.

But in this latter part Monsignore B—— described with considerable force and eloquence the enduring nature of the *Roman Catholic Church*, pointedly contrasting it, in that respect, with all other faiths and congregations whatever. There were many distinguished English Protestants present, and there was nothing in the discourse that could reasonably shock or offend any of them for assuredly there is nothing offensive in the assertion of a bishop of one persuasion that his faith is likely to endure longer than the faith of any other. . . . He addressed us not in any words at all approaching in severity to Dante's

“ O cacciati del ciel, gente dispetta,”

and yet it was impossible not to feel that in some degree he did address us as heretics when he quoted a passage from the *Edinburgh Review*, eloquently but strangely alluding to the comparative immutability of the Romish faith above all others. I have not the article to which the good bishop referred, before me, and it is always dangerous to quote from memory; but the purport of the passage I have not forgotten, though I will not attempt to give the words. The sentence formed the peroration of a very spirited passage, and was to this effect or something like it, namely That St. Peter's would still stand uninjured, intact, and entire, as we now behold it, when the travelling antiquarian shall be seen, standing upon a broken fragment of London

Bridge, in order to take a sketch of the ruins of St. Paul's.

On this question there is none among us who will venture to avail themselves of that commodious magazine of defiance contained in the phrase "*nous verrons*;" for deeper into the future than any living eye can look lies the answer to it.

In a conversation which I had some time ago with a gentleman of brilliant capacity, great learning, strong feelings, but much temperance in the expression of them, I ventured to speak very freely on the effect produced on the minds of strangers by sundry *peculiarities* in the outward and visible policy of Rome towards her own people.

On almost every subject in any way connected with this theme he spake with quite as much freedom as if he had been an Englishman discoursing upon it with a neighbour, by his own fireside. But when, inevitably as it seemed to me, the discussion reached the point which involved the necessity of investigating the *infallibility* part of the question, he seemed to hold back . . . or, rather, as if there were other things of which he was thinking. And yet he was not absent; for his eye, which I almost fancy I see before me still, was full of meaning.

"Ma fè sembiante

D'uomo, cui altra cura stringa, e morda,

Che quella di colui che gli è davante."

And a party of ladies coming in at the very moment when I began to feel doubtful whether I had said something to shock him, or whether he was going to speak again, and with more perfect freedom than ever, he went away, and I was left to decide for myself, whether it is not possible for a person of perfectly enlightened views in politics to be still a faithful Roman Catholic. I have heard many people, and of more nations than one, deny the possibility of this ; and declare that freedom of mind, on any subject, was perfectly incompatible with Popish restraint ; but I doubt the truth of this doctrine. I see no reason why a Roman Catholic, because he conscientiously believes the creed that has been taught him, should therefore be incapable of forming a rational opinion upon the wisest manner of regulating the affairs of men ; and I would much rather believe that the regeneration of this fine country should be produced by the agency of enlightened men, who held fast the religious faith in which they were educated, than by that of reasoners, whose first proof of advanced intelligence was given by freeing themselves from all religious restraint whatever. The mixing up so inseparably, as it is the custom to do, the idea of Roman degradation and Roman faith, has much dangerous fallacy in it, and is calculated to do the cause of Roman political liberty great harm. Let a free constitution be established, by which all orders of men, and not the priests alone, shall have influence

in the government; let industry be fostered and not checked; and let education, such as is given to the people in Prussia, be sedulously spread among the people of the ecclesiastical states, instead of nurturing them in darkness as carefully as gardeners do a mushroom bed, and the wished for result will come, whether the prevailing religion be Popish or Protestant a result which could hardly be predicted with confidence if the majority were of no religion at all.

LETTER XVIII.

Artists of England established at Rome. — Their pleasant Intimacy. — Thorwaldson. — His House, and his Studio. — Statue of the Duke of Wellington. — Gibson's opinion upon it. — Statue of Lord Byron by Thorwaldson. — Said to be left in the London Docks. — Works of Gibson. — His Hunter. — Mr. Wyatt's Spring. — The best of modern Italian Pictures are Copies. — Of modern Originals, Chevalier de Schmid at Florence, and Mr. Buchmer, Mr. Swinton, and Mr. Williams, at Rome, exhibit the best Specimens.

Rome, December, 1841.

I HAVE had the great pleasure of making the acquaintance of several of our distinguished artists who are settled here, and I have seen nothing that has pleased me better than the tone in which these gentlemen are received every where, and that which appears so delightfully to pervade their own peculiar circle, by which I mean to include all artists deserving the name, let them be of what nation they may. I have occasionally seen at home symptoms of very pleasing attachment and intimacy between individuals pursuing the same line of study but there it seems more the result of accidental association, which might have chanced to be the same, had one of the parties been a sculptor or a painter, and the other a lawyer or any thing

else. But what I allude to here is different. No person of common observation can circulate among the studios of Rome without perceiving a feeling of general and common interest, that seems to bind all artists together in one band. It is not only the cordiality of their intercourse, but the true and unmistakeable interest which each one appears to take in the labours of the rest, that makes them thus seem one "band of brothers." And it is easy, too, to trace the source of this, which lies in the true and genuine love of art. I said to one of the band, who in his own studio was talking to me with great enthusiasm of different objects that I should find in others "How you all of you seem to know what all the rest are about!" "Know!" he replied laughing — "Why there is not a single figure modelled in Rome upon which we do not all sit in judgment."

It is impossible for an English person to make a tour through the studios of Rome (or, as Mrs. Starke would more correctly call them, the *studj*) without being very deeply gratified by the superiority of the English artists. There are many admirable works going on among *all nations*, and of course the Italians themselves are not behind hand; but I believe it will be generally allowed on all sides that both Gibson and Wyatt are decidedly in the van. I had the pleasure of being introduced to the venerable Thorwaldsen at one of the Duke of Torlonia's parties, and went afterwards with a party of English

friends who were well acquainted with him, to pay him a visit. The multitude of noble works produced during the long life of this truly great artist, have rendered his name so decidedly the first among modern sculptors, that it is quite superfluous to name the rank he holds, but neither at his residence nor in his studio are many of his marbles to be found. The world has been too long aware of the value of his chisel to permit his retaining its products near him. Why has not wealthy England more of his great master-pieces? At his residence we found a few casts — most of them were miniature sketches of some of his lesser works. But the walls of his rooms, of which we saw three or four, were entirely covered with paintings of the Roman artists of the day, to whom he is an affectionate friend and patron. In some of these there was a good deal of merit, but I confess I thought the great majority abominable. A sketch by Lawrence of the head of the Pope whose portrait made so much noise among us shone out among them all, like Jupiter among the lesser stars. The most interesting picture there was a portrait of Thorwaldsen himself, by Vernet. It is an admirable likeness, and will I hope be well engraved; for it catches with great skill the sort of earnest expression of the eye, which I never saw where there was not genius at work within, and which must have been infinitely more difficult to catch now, that the light of the organ has faded, than when it shone

forth, as I am sure it must have done, in days of yore. The head is still a fine one, but it must have been magnificent.

I was told by Count Hawkes le Grice, a gentleman who seems particularly well acquainted with art and artists, that the early days of Thorwaldsen were obscured by great difficulties, and that it was an Englishman who had the glory of first opening to him the path he has since trod so nobly. The yet unknown sculptor had brought himself to Rome not without difficulty, and had moulded a figure of Jason, his first great work, which, notwithstanding its excellence, led to no success; and in despair the young Swede broke it, and turned his steps away from unpropitious Rome. It chanced that Mr. Thomas Hope, so well known for the discriminating taste that could trace beauty wherever it was to be found, whether in a stool or a statue, arrived immediately after his departure, and saw the abandoned fragments of the Jason. . . . It chanced, too, that some accident occurred *en route* to Thorwaldsen, which obliged him to retrace his steps to Rome. . . . The man of taste and the man of art met, the dismembered limbs of the Jason were re-united, and a statue in marble ordered to be chiseled forthwith after the ill-used model. . . . The order was executed, and the result is known to all the civilised world. From that period the sun of Thorwaldsen's fame continued steadily to

rise towards its zenith, and it will keep its altitude as long as marble lasts.

After visiting the great man, we visited his works, that is to say, we went to his studio, and there saw casts from some of his finest groups and a few charming things *in relief* in which branch of art no modern can be compared to him. But the mere *locale* of Thorwaldsen's studio is now sufficient to give name and fame to many charming things which issue thence, in the formation of which his eye alone, and not his hand has aided. His chief workman is an Italian, who appears already to have reached middle age, with no greater renown than that of being a very clever workman ; but this man not only models the subjects of a considerable portion of the smaller medallions *in relief* which issue from Thorwaldsen's studio, but composes them likewise, and that in a manner which interested me exceedingly. At the time we paid our visit, a very large order was under hand for a series of medallions in white marble, to decorate some of the princely structures which the Torlonia family are erecting. . . . The subjects are all classical, and furnished to this very ordinary-looking artificer by the much-thumbed pages of a little pocket Ovid, which was stuck open upon the slate whereon he worked his clay exactly as a model would be if he were copying. The grace and spirit of the little groups thus composed is equal to the apparent facility with which they are produced, and I never

remember to have watched any operation that appeared more full of interest. The brilliant rapidity of this man is truly astonishing; for he seems to copy the thoughts of the poet in marble with little more meditation than others would give to the copying the words by which they are conveyed by a pen.

I was told, from a source that I conceive to be excellent authority, that when the city of Glasgow decided upon erecting a statue to the Duke of Wellington an order for it was transmitted to Thorwaldsen, but with the understanding that the hero of a hundred fields was to stand in colossal distinctness before the eyes of generations and generations yet unborn, in full uniform as a field marshal Thorwaldsen, it seems, thereupon shook his grey locks, and with something like the shivering fit of an ague, declined the execution of an order accompanied by such *barbarous* conditions. At present this work is in the hands of an Italian artist And with such conditions I cannot regret that it is not a British artist who is to execute it although the pre-eminent excellence of our sculptors at this time makes it appear almost monstrous that any other should be employed upon a subject so deeply national. A design for this *uniformed* statue was submitted to Mr. Gibson by a lady deeply interested in the subject, and well known at Rome, as well as at home, for her consummate taste, and thorough know-

ledge of art ; and the excellent judgment, unaffected good sense, and perfect taste of the reply, induce me to copy it.

“ Dear Mrs. B.,

“ I feel very much flattered by the compliment which Sir J. S. and yourself confer upon me, by requesting my opinion upon the design for the Wellington monument ; but it is with diffidence that I comply with this request, as it places me in a position more flattering than easy. With respect to the design, it strikes me that the object of it is to convey a simple idea in the most familiar way, so that all persons, even the most simple clown, may understand it.

“ How necessary in art is perspicuity ! There is the Duke in his very dress and there, at the base, are soldiers whom the hero commanded, of different nations, in all their reality of costume. Caps, coats, boots, straps, &c. forming one high sculptured pile The object is successfully obtained. . . .

“ I can say nothing of the composition of the figures ; for that part is not sufficiently considered. I perceive more intelligence in the horse than in the man.

“ And now I will venture to express my feeling as to the general character that should prevail in a national monument on such an occasion.

“ The Duke, seated upon his steed with a calm,

thoughtful, firm, forward look, full of steady purpose, with his cloak gracefully folded, so as to hide as much as possible the obnoxious costume The horse not so violently displaying his action up in the air Less action is more suitable to the material, and simplicity always gives grandeur to sculpture.

“ The front and sides of the pedestal certainly to be adorned with *bassi relievi* of battles. If figures are at all introduced at the base, they should be of a lofty, beautiful, poetical, and illustrative character. Every group in sculpture should possess those qualities which render sculpture a noble art. If you take away all that constitutes beauty, and leave us no poetry nothing of the human form divine nor of the rich combinations of drapery, and flowing outline, you cannot be certain of the approbation of men of true and refined taste and you may be certain that posterity will not dig for the fragments of our costume monuments, and place them in museums, as we now do those of the Greeks, as objects of beauty.

(Signed) “ JOHN GIBSON.”

Every atom of this is admirable and the “ *calm, thoughtful, firm, forward look, full of steady purpose,*” is a statue in thought.

* * * * *

When I was lamenting the scarcity of Thor-

waldson's works in England, a gentleman replied, "At any rate, you have one more of them than you know what to do with." I asked what he meant, and he replied, "A statue of Byron, intended for Westminster Abbey, was finished by Thorwaldsen many years ago, and sent to England. But it still lies unpacked in a warehouse at the docks because the authorities refuse to give it a place in the Abbey."

I presumed him to be jesting, and told him so. He assured me with great appearance of gravity that he was not ; but nevertheless it still appears to me impossible that the fact can be as he stated. If, indeed, it be true, that a niche in the Abbey has been refused (which I cannot think very probable), still, the subject and the artist both being remembered, it is difficult to believe that some means would not have been hit upon for bringing an object so full of interest to the light of day.

In common with all who truly admire the genius of Lord Byron, I grieve to think that he ever

— " wrote

A line which, dying, he might wish to blot ;"

but yet I greatly doubt if none who have been honoured by a memorial in Westminster Abbey have left on record traces of a more unfitting state of mind than that of him who could compose the lines following : —

" Thou, who canst guide the wand'ring star
Through trackless realms of ether's space,
Who calm'st the elemental war,
Whose hand from pole to pole I trace.

" Thou who in wisdom placed me here,
Who, when Thou wilt, can take me hence,
Ah! while I tread this earthly sphere,
Extend to me Thy wide defence.

" To Thee, my God, to Thee I call!
Whatever weal or woe betide,
By Thy command I rise or fall,
In thy protection I confide.

" If when this dust to dust's restored,
My soul shall float on airy wing,
How shall Thy glorious name adored
Inspire her feeble voice to sing!

* * * * *

" To Thee I breathe my humble strain,
Grateful for all Thy mercies past,
And hope, my God! to Thee again,
This erring life may fly at last."

It is very possible, I think, to wish that the divinity of this touching poem were throughout the whole of it more correct; and yet to question the propriety of excluding its author, and the author of *Childe Harold* also, from the holy earth of his country's Pantheon However, as I told my Roman friend, "I doubt the fact," and, moreover, I intend to doubt it as long as possible.

* * * * *

But to return to our own sculptors It would be a very vain attempt were I to endeavour to give you an idea of the beauty, the grace, the

living tenderness of many of the lovely marbles that British genius has created within the influence of the eloquent local incitements to excellence with which this place abounds. My surprise, I honestly confess, has been pretty nearly equal to my pleasure. There is one figure still in clay in the studio of Mr. Gibson, which even there, in the midst of a marble world of life-like beauty, stands out pre-eminent. It represents a *classical* hunter of the heroic age of Greece, and in the moment when he discovers a beast of prey His eye is fixed upon it follows it holds in his dog, but for a moment, to excite him, ere he springs forward upon the prey. The statue is in a stooping posture, and both hands are employed; the right in holding back his dog, and the left by grasping his short hunting spear.

The expression and action are momentary, but intense he is roused, excited, watchful, and resolute. The game is seen at some distance upon a rising ground, so as to give more spirit and movement to the heads both of dog and man both are modelled from nature; and I think that in point of life, grace, and movement, the group might better bear comparison with the works of antiquity than any thing I have ever seen.

It appears to me that sculpture has recovered more of the spirit of times past than painting has done. In England, indeed, one might probably come to a different conclusion, but not so either

at Rome or at Florence. I was greatly pleased to hear both Thorwaldsen and Gibson speak in terms of high admiration of Powers. Both these accomplished sculptors seemed to anticipate a very brilliant future for him, and both acknowledged that his manner was peculiarly his own.

* * * * *

Liverpool, ever liberal Liverpool, has, or will soon have, many of Gibson's finest works. Two magnificent statues of Huskisson, one already on his monument a cast only remaining at Rome and the other still under the sculptor's hands, but intended for the town-hall, are among these ; and both might fearlessly be placed beside greater rivals. The last is a donation from the illustrious statesman's widow. It would be well for our reputation in the republic of art if there were a few more Liverpools and a few more Mrs. Huskissons among us. The richest nation in the world surely ought not to be the poorest in statues, and yet I greatly fear that this is a statement which cannot be contradicted when said of England. I was vexed, in every studio, when inquiring where such and such works were going, to be answered, incessantly, to Russia to Russia to Russia many to Sweden, to Munich, nay to America but few, sadly few, to England. The names of the dukes of Devonshire and Sutherland, and of one or two other British individuals, occasionally cheered my wounded English pride ; but of national orders,

as in the case of Russia, Bavaria, and Sweden, alas ! not one. At least if any such are under the chisels of Rome, I was not fortunate enough to see or hear of them.

In the studio of Mr. Wyatt, among a multitude of other charming things, there is a figure of Spring, with the robe of Winter just falling from her delicate limbs The fresh beauty of this young girl's figure has a poetic loveliness about it which would give her a right to take her place in any gallery in the world. I know not for whom it is destined, but I fear it is not for the British Museum.

That there are a multitude of charming statues, and more still perhaps of works *in relievo*, among the modern artists of Rome, is most certain but I have neither time nor space to rehearse to you a hundredth part of what I see here, and any thing like detail on this subject would lead to very inconvenient length. By far the best things I have seen, *selon moi*, among the native pictures of the day, are copies from the old masters. Many of these are quite good enough to make me long to carry them home with me. They are excellent in themselves, and most consoling as memoranda. Of these I saw more, and better, at Florence than I have done here ; but the facilities for copying there, with every sort of comfort, are very great, and the temptation greater still. The best original picture of the day that I saw at Florence was from the

pencil of a German the Chevalier de Schmid the subject, a man sitting alone in an old-fashioned chamber with various articles of highly polished armour on the floor. The management of the light, as well as the drawing of the figure, was admirable. There is a young English artist at Rome of the name of Buckner, who works in water-colours with all the vigour and finish of oil-painting. His portfolios are filled with original groups after nature, all, or nearly all, composed of models chosen from among this most picturesque of people. It is quite impossible to convey to you an idea of the spirit, life, and originality, of these drawings. What the secret is, I know not; but he seems to me to have invented a manner entirely his own. Another young Englishman, or to speak more correctly, a young Scotchman, Mr. Swinton, who has but recently devoted himself to the art, from pure devotion to it, promises, I think, to become an admirable portrait-painter. . . . His manner is slight and masterly, and his female portraits have a grace that reminded me of the ease and elegance of Lucas.

There is yet another English artist who has just finished a picture, which it is impossible to look at without feeling a strong desire to descant upon it. The artist is Mr. Penny Williams, and the picture he calls "*Il voto*." It represents a young female convalescent, accompanied by her mother and friends on a pilgrimage to the shrine of *La Madonna*

della Salute to offer thanksgiving for her recovery. The story is beautifully told, and forms a lovely picture, the merits of which seem to be very justly appreciated at Rome for I hear of it every where, and I have little doubt that the name of the artist will soon become as popular in England as it is at Rome. It is impossible to see this picture without feeling that he deserves it should be so.

LETTER XIX.

The Transfiguration. — The St. Jerome. — Great Length of Time required by Rome for the Examination of Works of Art. — Library of the Vatican. — Michael Angelo's Frescoes. — Collections at the Capitol. — St. Paul's Church. — The English Burying-ground. — Castle of St. Angelo. — Tomb of Adrian. — Benvenuto Cellini. — Theatrical Parties at Prince Tortonja's. — The Colonna. — Presentation to the Pope. — Examination of St. Peter's. — The under Church. — Canova's Monument of Clement XIII. — Monument to the last Stuart. — Sir Walter Scott. — Mosaics. — Receiving the Black Veil.

Rome, December, 1841.

AT last we have seen the Transfiguration, and the St. Jerome of Domenichino which hangs opposite, and which to my feeling is very nearly as fine a picture as the other. . . . Both are transcendent, and are enough to fill the mind for many hours, without any other object whatever to divide attention with them. But, alas! how insufficient the time which we have been able to devote to them! and how greatly, too, I begin to regret that I cannot prolong my stay in this art-full city!

The question as to which may be the most beautiful, or which the most agreeable residence among the cities of Italy, must for ever remain an unsettled one, because it must depend entirely

upon individual taste and manner of life to decide it but as to which city ought to have most time given to it by those whose only object is to become acquainted with antiquities, and with the vast treasury of art which Italy contains, there can be no doubt. Rome demands months, from the same activity and power of exertion which would make days suffice elsewhere. . . . But regret on this point is idle. Those who have homes to which they are eager to return cannot reasonably lament the blessing, even though it curtails the enjoyment of other delights but at any rate, when arranging the allotment of the time to be given to Italy, it will be well to remember that Rome requires by far the longest portion of it. But it is only when you actually get to Rome that you can fully believe this, so much is there to enchant the spirits elsewhere also. But once at Rome, and the fact becomes clear.

With the exception of the two majestic pictures I have just mentioned, the Madonna di Foligno is the only one in the Vatican gallery that particularly enchanted me. . . . This Madonna, and the child too, is Raffael which is the only epithet I know of which can describe it. It is only in Italy, however, despite the cartoons and the Marquis of Westminster, that this epithet can be fully understood.

To the library of the Vatican we had the pleasure of being taken by Monsignore A——, a

man of taste and an accomplished scholar; and under his auspices we had the advantage of seeing some of the most interesting manuscripts. . . . The extent of the whole collection is stupendous. . . . He accompanied us also to the Sistine chapel, where I did my best to *enjoy* the fresco wonders it contains. But the prodigious charm which they have for connoisseurs is beyond me. I look at them with a vast deal of interest and curiosity; but as a matter of pleasure I would much rather find myself in the gallery at Bologna, or before Titian's Annunciation at Venice.

It must, indeed, be a very extraordinary excess of presumptuous folly which could induce any one not educated as an artist to express a doubt as to the wisdom of the decision now sanctioned by ages, which has declared the frescos of the Vatican to be among the most precious treasures of art. With the most perfect sincerity, I declare that I truly believe them to be so. But if it would be folly to deny this, it would, on my part at least, be gross affectation were I to say that I know and feel, on the authority of my own eyes and intellect, that they are so. Perhaps had I light to see, and ample time to examine them, the effect might be different. It might be in some degree the same as what I have experienced upon the examination of many works of the chisel, which when I first looked at them, appeared to me less obviously beautiful than others accounted of less value. In.

this case of the statues, wherever my mind has at length followed the judgment of the learned, it has always been by a sort of slow and patient development of truth. There are morsels, fragments I mean, of antique statuary, in which the first glance of an unlearned eye discerns little or nothing beyond a mutilated piece of marble, interesting, perhaps, from its well-authenticated antiquity, but worthy of attention from no other cause. A lengthened examination of this fragment, however, will very often force upon the mind such a conviction of the truth of its details as leads to wonder and delight . . . and it requires no learning, beyond that observant learning of the eye, which is, or may be, common to all men, to be aware of the excelling skill of the artist. But the case is far different in examining the wide-spreading acres of stucco in the Sistine chapel, before which all bow (all excepting the unhappy ignorant) with a fulness of delight, the expression of which has a thousand times caused me, when far, far away, to envy very heartily all who had the power of looking at them. Yet now I gaze at these wonders of art again and again without feeling the slightest sensation of pleasure. What I do feel, indeed, while looking at them, is lamentably the reverse of it; for I suffer, in the first place, all the keenness of disappointment from not finding the gratification I had hoped for, and all the mortification, in the second, which can arise

from knowing that the disappointment is caused solely by my own deficiencies. In the frescos of Giotto, both in the Campo Santo at Pisa, and in the chapel of the Annunziata at Padua, but particularly in the latter, there is an interest totally independent of the execution, which renders every trace of the artist's hand most precious. The name of Dante alone, so joined as it is with that of Giotto, is quite sufficient to explain this, even without the positive charm which the sweet simplicity of the female figures, and the easy dignity of the male ones, cannot fail to inspire. But there is something monstrous, rather than dignified, to my fancy, in the colossal turbulence of Michael Angelo's compositions in the Sistine chapel, and to this I fear no length of study could ever reconcile me, nor any thing short of the veriest affectation lead me to praise : —

“ Oh ! how I grieve ! (as the song says) Oh ! how I grieve,
I ne'er their charms can know ! ”

But such is my destiny, and I must submit to it nevertheless : —

“ Ancor men duol, pur ch' i' me ne remembri ! ”

We have more than once driven to the Capitol, and have been absolutely unable to enter it from the potency of the attraction without . . . but at length we have achieved the adventure, and, manfully subduing the cunning wiles of all the ruins on the outside, turned resolutely away from them,

and examined the still more venerable antiques within. Of these, the Dying Gladiator is to my feeling so greatly the most impressive, that it has nearly obliterated the recollection of the rest . . . though I confess that I do remember the mournful Hecuba a little, and cannot quite forget the Trpsy Fawn in *rosso antico*, nor yet the majestic Synod of Emperors, nor the Bathing Venus, nor the pretty Flora, nor the elegant Antinous . . . not to mention many most exquisite morsels in relief that kept us very long in attendance upon them. There is, too, a delicate mosaic representing a Group of Pigeons, which I think the most beautiful specimen of this species of labour-loving art that I have ever seen. But this Dying Gladiator is a whole poem in one piece of stone. I heartily wish that the wise ones would leave him alone, and suffer him to be a gladiator still, *sans contredit*; for the story which his failing strength tells us so eloquently in that character loses much of its pathos if spoken in any other. It would be wise to see the Gladiator one day, and the rest of this magnificent collection another.

Rather glad, perhaps, to have a good reason for mounting to the Capitol again, we divided the business, and visited the Palazzo de' Conservatori another day. There is a tremendously fine group in the quadrangle of a lion that has subdued and is in the act of devouring a horse. I wonder where the artist got models for this group . . .

He could scarcely have imagined the agony of the one beast, and the contented ferocity of the other.

A Sibyl, by Guercino, which is in the gallery here, is very lovely; as is also, to my fancy, a Magdalen by Tintoret. Lovely, however, only from expression, for I have heard the picture severely handled by critics, and, perhaps, not altogether without reason; nevertheless it is the only Magdalen I ever saw, except the statue of Canova, that had not something of meretricious beauty inconsistent with her changed position. Even Titian's sorrowing penitent at Venice, despite her tearful eye, and despite, too, of the rude drapery that wraps her limbs, speaks not of such contrite suffering as do the pale harassed features of the "poor Syrian girl" depicted here.

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We have given another long delightful morning to roaming about this same favourite region, but extending the ramble beyond the walls. Just below the Aventine Hill are the astounding fragments, known by the name of Caracalla's Baths. Nothing remaining in Rome, not even the majestic Coliseum itself, has given me such an idea of the grandiose splendour of these marvellous people as have these wide-spreading ruins. Of their entire extent, and of the noble proportions of different chambers within them, it is easy to judge on the spot, but of the costly magnificence of the finishing, no just idea can be formed with-

out taking the trouble to remember how many noble works contained in the public museums, as well as in private collections, have been discovered here. There is still a wide expanse, where it is evident that many feet of soil have accumulated above the level of the lower rooms, which still remain unopened. The expense of an extensive *scavo* is so great, the government treasury so poor, and the various points which still promise well so numerous, that very little is annually done, in comparison to what might be performed were there more wealth and more energy. It is, I think, greatly to be lamented, and that without any jesting at all, that here, as well as at Naples, liberal arrangements are not made, either with foreign governments, or with wealthy individuals, for the purpose of disinterring the treasures of art, which are *as* certainly under the soil here as coal is under the soil of Yorkshire or Northumberland.

The museums of Rome are already so completely filled, that it is very possible inconvenience rather than advantage might be anticipated as the result of new acquisitions; but it must surely be matter of universal regret if, for this reason, the earth is still to lie heavy on what might be of such inestimable value to modern art elsewhere. It is quite sufficient to enter the studios of modern artists at Rome, or at Florence either, in order to become convinced that the habitual study of antique models *does* produce a very ennobling effect

upon art; and if this be so, the fact that a country of such enormous wealth as England should be so comparatively poor in that which lies buried, where gold would make so very useful an exchange for marble, really looks like very bad management in all parties.

If a holy, apostolical, right Roman and right Papal reason were wanted for such an exchange of commodities, it might surely be found at full length, and in height, breadth, and all other dimensions to boot, at the prodigious structure of St. Paul's church, now erecting over the ruins of that destroyed by fire in 1823. . . . That some Roman Catholic reason of more than common importance must exist for the splendid rebuilding of this church is most certain; or the enormous sums now expending on the work would be spared. . . . For it is well known that the money is not furnished without the greatest difficulty . . . and it is well known also, that should the enormous structure be ever completed, which it is intended to be as speedily as possible, the malaria which prevails around the region where it is placed is of so malignant a kind, that nothing but very strictly exercised authority will induce priests to perform there the ceremonies of their religion, and that nothing whatever will induce the public to attend them. The labours now proceeding on this spot are carried on entirely by convicts, whose chains, both literally and figuratively, prevent their having any power of choice.

The superior workmen employed remain there but for a short period at a time, and that with all possible precaution. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the splendour of the work is perfectly astonishing.

The reason assigned for the peculiarly pestilential air of this immediate neighbourhood is the removal of a forest by Pius the Sixth, which was considered to be a too convenient shelter for robbers and assassins to be safely permitted to remain so near the gates of Rome. If this cause be the real one, of which there seems to be but little doubt, as the air was formerly considered as peculiarly salubrious, it strongly confirms the truth of the theory which attributes all the malaria in the neighbourhood of Rome to the absence of strong and free vegetation and it is therefore the very munificence of Heaven which, thus fearfully ill-managed, occasions the evil! I have been told again and again, by men of science in Italy, that if the fertile fields of Tuscany were permitted to fall into the uncultivated state of the campagna of Rome, malaria the most tremendous would be the inevitable consequence, and that what is now the garden of Italy would become a Golgotha. What an immense responsibility does the *every-day* difference between a country well governed and one that is not so throw on those who are called to the task of governing!

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The English burying-ground is a spot in every

way interesting to us. I was astonished to find it so thickly tenanted. The stone erected to the fair, the young, the much-loved Rose Bathurst, recalled a tragedy that I rarely look upon the Tiber without remembering. Another tomb that arrested our attention was that of Shelley. The inscription "Cor Cordium" made one pity the friend who inscribed it; for to think thus of one lost to us is to mourn him. The stone records that he was drowned on the coast of Spezia at the age of thirty! . . . Let his youth be remembered, and the words "radical and atheist," inscribed after his name in the Montanvers Album, be forgotten.

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We have had the gratification of going over the castle of St. Angelo, accompanied by Monsignore Piccolomini, who is the minister of war . . . He is an amiable and highly intelligent man, and I could not but be tempted to wish that one walk, and not two, so widely apart, should have been marked out for him. We certainly hear on high authority of "the church militant here on earth;" but I doubt if regulating the management of fortresses and culverins can be considered as a part of the ecclesiastical combatings thereby intended. There is on many subjects a want of common sense at Rome that often strikes me as very *mysteriously ominous*.

By the help of torches we descended to the Tomb of Adrian, the grave itself being as narrow

and as humble as that of the *smallest* citizen ; though the wide space enclosed by the massive walls around it conveys a very impressive idea of state and dignity. In this crypt many noble statues were found interred to keep the dead emperor company ; and one colossal figure still remains, to indicate, I suppose, the purpose for which such niches as it occupies was formed. If a tomb *must* be splendid, it is more rational to make it so after the manner of a Borghese or a Corsini However, there is something exceedingly like the Egyptian fashion in this colossal over-laying of the little grave, which suffices a man for decomposing himself ; and the antiquity of the mode, at least, is venerable. Having descended as low, we next mounted as high as we could, and enjoyed another panorama of Rome, less extensive than that seen from St. Peter's, less beautiful than that of the Capitol, but full of interest, and showing to great advantage many objects not seen to equal advantage elsewhere. From the platform we penetrated to the dungeon once occupied for an entire year by Benvenuto Cellini, on suspicion of murder. Two well-drawn heads in chalk are shown on the wall as done by him in almost total darkness, all the light that could have reached him coming from the sloping aperture near the roof, by which his food was conveyed to him. . . . Both heads were surrounded by a circle in the manner of a glory, and were evidently intended to represent our

Saviour. The reverend minister of war then took us through the private passage, recently repaired, by which the Pope may pass from his bed-chamber in the Vatican to the interior of the fortress of St. Angelo. We did not, however, penetrate to the bed-room of his Holiness, as a door nearly at the Vatican extremity of the passage requires two keys to open it; one being always in possession of the major duomo, and the other of the minister of war.

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We have thrice been at very large and splendid parties at the mansion of Prince Torlonia in the Borgo Nuovo, which were rendered much more agreeable than such gathering together of strangers is generally made, by the clever device of having a company of French comedians to perform little comedies in a theatre which has been constructed in one of the rooms of the palace. This theatrical company was the same as we had before seen in two or three places Florence, Lucca, and Naples and, for the most part, they played extremely well. The piece which, of all those performed during these three evenings, was the most admired, was Scribe's "Verre d'Eau." It was admirably performed, and delighted every body.

The beautiful young princess received her guests in a handsome drawing-room, where we drank tea and ate ices till a signal given to the fair hostess,

who then led the way to the theatre and again, when the performance was over, led us back to the same splendid apartments, when the tea-drinking and ice-eating recommenced, and the party chatted together till midnight. The certainty of meeting every body you know, the *petite comédie* and the pleasure of looking at the very lovely hostess, sufficed to make these evening meetings very full and very gay. The princess is of the right noble house of Colonna a fact of which I did not feel myself perfectly convinced, though assured of it on all sides, till I saw the family symbol the "*columna flecti nescio*," repeated about a thousand times over at the newly erected and most splend suburban villa prepared for the charming bride immediately outside the walls of Rome ; and then I felt that seeing was believing The Medici again !

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We have had the honour of being presented to his Holiness. The Hanoverian minister very kindly negotiated the business for us, and in company with about twenty other persons, all English, we repaired to the Vatican. The room in which we were received was a small apartment near the library, and nothing could be less magnificent than this little reception room, though in the middle of the richest palace in the world. His Holiness wore a white dress, which I believe is that of the monastic order to which he belonged, and also the small

white cap with which all portraits, Raffael and Lawrence inclusive, have made us familiar. His countenance is amiable, and expressive of much gentleness, and his stature rather below the common size. We found him standing in front of a small table, which was placed before a canopy, under which I imagine he would have sat, had not his politeness to the ladies he expected prevented it. . . . The party therefore naturally formed themselves into a semicircle round him; and his first words on seeing how extensive that circle was, were, “La stanze è troppo piccolo!” . . . He looked at us all with much good humour and kindness; but as he did not walk round the circle, and as the persons forming the circle were not instructed to pass before him, he rather harangued than conversed with us. But considering the awkwardness of this arrangement, he managed it exceedingly well. He inquired our names from the Hanoverian minister, in the order in which we stood, and very politely expressed regret that he could not address us in our own language. The appearance of the circle was singular enough, from the ladies being all dressed in black, and wearing black veils (which is *de rigueur*), while the gentlemen were as gaily habited as possible; all being in full dress, chiefly military, and one in the full Highland costume. This last especially attracted the attention of his Holiness, so much so, that the graceful young chieftain was compelled, in some sort, to make a

step forward, that his Holiness might have an opportunity of seeing more distinctly the jewelled powder horn, which appeared particularly to have arrested his attention, but which he mistook for a *mull*, which he said he had formerly seen a Scotchman carry, offering the contents to all his friends a very natural mistake, snuff being, very properly, a more familiar idea to his Holiness than gunpowder.

He then asked the minister if there were not a literary lady in the company, which being answered in the affirmative, and the individual indicated, his holiness inquired what species of compositions had been produced, and then remarked that there *were* many books written in English, but that he had not read them He then, *à-propos* of the great advantage of a general acquaintance with modern languages, spoke to us of the extraordinary acquirements in that line of the Cardinal Mezzofante, and related an anecdote respecting him, in which this remarkable faculty had enabled his Holiness to detect a renegado Christian, who attempted to pass himself as a Turk, desirous of professing the Catholic faith the "*Roman Catholic faith*," added his Holiness significantly, correcting himself. He told this little story with a good deal of spirit, and altogether got through the audience, which for many reasons must have been rather an embarrassing one, with a great deal of good-humoured ease. We remained thus standing before

him for about twenty minutes, or half an hour, and then he bowed us off.

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Once more we have mounted to the top of St. Peter's, and being now less a novice, I moved on more deliberately, and looked more speculatively about me. . . . And this unpoetical mode of observing the structure in detail should not be neglected ; for as it is more sobering than exciting, it permits a rational sort of wonder at the means, instead of an explicable ecstasy at the end obtained. . . . On this occasion we were taken into some rather dark, but pretty large-sized rooms, situated among the mysteries of the roof, where we saw the model of the Basilica as originally designed by Bramante, and it well deserves examination. The dome, indeed I may say the *domes* are incomparably better according to their present arrangement ; but the front not including the majestic portico, which ought perhaps to atone for all its defects, was any thing but improved by Maderno's deviation from the original design.

We perceived that the exterior of the dome was already prepared in some degree for the illuminations of Easter. These permanent preparations consist of a multitude of iron saucers fixed in lines upon the leads. The person who attended us said that above four hundred men are employed to produce this perilous posstime, the illumination of the whole being produced as nearly as possible at the

same moment. These men are secured by ropes fastened to massive iron hooks inserted in the wall of the dome ; but notwithstanding this precaution the business is considered to be very hazardous, and, as a part of their payment, they all receive plenary absolution before they commence their fearful task ; which task, considering that they are to reach their unstable stations in total darkness, must I think be horrible, exceedingly. . . .

Having obtained a special order for the purpose, we descended into the subterranean church, the floor of which, and some trifling remains besides, are relics of the original building erected by Constantine over the bones of St. Peter, and, as they tell us, one half of that apostle's bones, and one half of those of St. Paul likewise, lie in the rich tomb which is entered from this subterranean church, and through the gilded grating of which you may spy the light of the hundred lamps that burn eternally around the *Sacra Confessione* above. The other half of their bones are said to lie in the church of St. Paul. This under church appears nearly circular, and is surrounded by ancient papal monuments. The well-masked entrance to it is by a small door in the base of one of the majestic monuments above ; and never did the glories of St. Peter break upon me more splendidly than on returning up the dark stair upon which this door opens, and stepping forth immediately beneath the dome. *Toute reflexion faite*, the astonishing Attila

relievo above the tomb of Leo the Great, and Michael Angelo's design over the monument of Paul the Third, all beautiful as it is despite the super-induced bronze drapery both these, and all the rest too, having been carefully examined, I rest in the belief that Canova's monument to Clement the Thirteenth, with its Genius and its Lions, is the finest in the church. This judgment is of the matter-of-fact kind which arises from remembering how again and again, I have turned back to it, for no especial purpose whatever, but solely because I could not help it.

Throughout the noble assemblage of tombs which adorn this peerless temple, though of course varying greatly, and inevitably, in merit as works of art, there are none which do not deserve the epithet of *noble*, save one the monument to the last of the Stuarts This, too, is the work of Canova, but the boasted subscriptions we have heard of furnished not in their aggregate, I presume, a sufficient spur to his intent to render the work worthy of himself, or of the noble race whose last farewell to earth it seems to utter or else his marble fell short but whatever the cause, or however it might look in his studio, it has, I cannot but think, the air of a very pitiful work under the roof of St. Peter's, and the pleasantest consideration for those who care about it is, that it is placed almost as much out of sight as possible.

I was told by Colonel H. B., who himself accompanied Sir Walter Scott to St. Peter's, that this humble memorial to the Stuart was the only object that appeared greatly to interest him He sat down before it long, and appeared to feel acutely. The feeling inspired by that name seemed to have outlived most others.

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The grand mosaics in this miracle of a church are the only works of the kind that I ever thought worthy the labour bestowed upon them ; but here, there is a fitness in the time-defying durability of the material which extorts approval. Any painting in St. Peter's would look but like silken embroidery upon adamant Besides, like some few other great ones, the Transfiguration, St. Jerome, and St. Petronilla, deserve a monument more enduring than themselves and here they are.

We went yesterday to the church of the Umiltà convent to see a young nun receive the black veil. This ceremony has less of scenic interest than that which precedes it, when the white veil is taken but it was more than sufficiently touching, and more than sufficiently melancholy. Four noble ladies, as we were given to understand, sat immediately before us. They were the mother and sisters of the pale young creature, whose features were permitted for the last time to be visible at the grating which divided the convent from the church, while the cardinal bishop re-

heard the rule to her, received her acceptance of it, and then threw over her the dismal drapery which was to hide her from all human eyes for ever ! This done, he dismissed her, and she departed, chaunting some appropriate requiem I presume her own and as her voice died away in the distance, I could not but think that the hearts of her mother and sisters must have died too.

LETTER XX.

Rome the Pantheon of great Names. — Effect of Rome upon the Mind in the Way of Education. — System of antiquarian Research pursued by a young Scotchman. — English Party at the Vatican, and at St. Peter's. — The Dwelling of Poussin. — The House in which he died. — The Dwellings of Claude Lorraine, and of Salvator Rosa. — Poussin not justly called an Artist of the French School of Painting, nor Gibson of the English School of Sculpture.

Rome, December, 1841.

IF there were no other source of interest in Rome, sufficient might be found in hunting out the residences of all the great men who have, from time to time, taken up their abode here, and in picking up all the traditionary anecdotes that remain of them. . . . *Bien entendu*, observe, that these reminiscences relate not to the Remus and Romulus people. Well as I love to look at all that is left of these, I do *not* devote much time to inquiring into personal anecdotes concerning them . . . of which we have, it may be, already quite enough, without either learning or inventing any more. But, putting for awhile all antiquarianism, properly so called, aside, it is marvellous to think what an immense proportion of all the human beings who have distinguished themselves since the Christian era began have left traces of their great names here. First

come, of course, the great Apostles, whose days of life, and whose hour of death, within these walls, have girded them with a halo of holiness that no human blundering can ever drive away. And then, as if this alone were enough of glory and renown to suffice even Rome for a few ages, there followed a strange series of adventures, not very prolific in good of any kind. But I am not going to attempt giving you an analysis of the first ages of Christian Rome, in about as many lines, but return to my assertion that a marvellously great number of mighty reputations have left traces of themselves here, and that one of the delights of finding oneself on this most remarkable spot of the earth's surface arises from remembering this, and from being yourself as near to all that is left of them as possible.

It perpetually strikes me, in conversing with my own countrymen here, whether young or old, that their tone of conversation is somewhat higher than I should have found it at home. . . . Great men's names, and great men's memories, and great men's works, are in their mouths, with a familiarity that could never have been obtained any where else, and that, too, without any mixture of affectation ; for, in truth, the affectation would be found in attempting to avoid it. I have strong doubts, as, perhaps, I may have told you before, whether several consecutive years passed abroad, even under the tuition of the very best of masters, is, *on the whole*, advantageous to young women, whom their

friends wish should remain *English*, and whose hopes are to become English wives and English mothers; but I have no doubt at all as to the decided intellectual advantages to be obtained by bringing either young men or young women of inquiring minds to pass a few months at Rome. I should not quite choose to say that no education could be accounted good without it, but I certainly do think that nothing else, of any sort or kind, can quite supply its place. Remember, however, if you please, that I am not of those who consider Rome the seat of miracles, *par excellence*, and, therefore, that I do not mean to tell you that young ladies and gentlemen who come to Rome very stupid go away the reverse. On the contrary, I think that it is not a very slight degree of intelligence which is requisite, in order to draw from such a visit the benefit which I think it capable, under favourable circumstances, of producing. But where the material does exist I think it cannot fail of doing much towards increasing its value. . . . I was struck by hearing the other day that a quite young Scotchman, whom I frequently meet in society here, of high birth, and rather remarkably endowed with the good gifts which are sometimes thought to make their possessors rather too welcome in the resorts of the young and fair to render grave pursuits very palatable. . . . I was struck by hearing that this young man not only employed his mornings in *études suivées* of all things connected with

antiquities and art, but that he never visited any classic relic, without requiring the gentleman who is travelling with him to be prepared with such passages in the Roman poets and historians as could best awaken the interest of the spot. . . . The tutor, if tutor this travelling companion be, is himself quite young enough to enter into the enthusiasm which suggested this plan ; and I can hardly imagine the possibility of a more delightful occupation for the young men, probably both of them fresh from the University, with all the elegant scholarship of well-taught Englishmen about them, and all the eloquent incentives to call it forth which Rome can give.

In matters of taste, and in every thing connected with the fine arts, it is interesting to watch the different degrees of excitement that the inconceivable richness of Rome, in this respect, produces. Some there are among us, I am sorry to confess, who kindle not with one single spark of enthusiasm at any thing but many, many more, seem to live here in a state of enchantment ; and I cannot but believe, that in all cases where a lively perception of the beautiful and the graceful in art has been awakened in the mind, the result of it will be felt and manifested, perhaps unconsciously, through life. I followed a party the other day, by no means a very stylish one, through one of the halls of the Vatican. . . . It consisted of what I presumed to be a father, mother, and two daughters

. . . . neither of the girls could be more than eighteen, and neither of them (though not perhaps positively plain) had the least right to be classed as beautiful, elegant, or fashionable. But their hearts were in their eyes, and so eager, so animated was the delight with which they both of them gazed at all that was best worth gazing at, that it was with the greatest difficulty I abstained from the rudeness of absolutely following them. When fixed, as if spell-bound, before one of the two sitting statues, whose marble life and marble wisdom so nearly produce the effect of living eloquence upon all who look at them, one of the girls said to the other, just loud enough for me to hear "Is it a dream? Can you believe that you really are here, looking at THAT?" . . . and the finger, and the eye, and the accent, said altogether quite enough to make me understand that she thought herself the very happiest creature in the world. Truly did I rejoice with her that she was there; and truly do I wish that all who could feel the same keen delight could be there too. As far as this awakening the mind to what is excellent and beautiful in art goes, I conceive that there is, in the whole world, no second receipt for it nothing that can be set in comparison with Rome. Were painting, indeed, the sole object of this species of interest (which I think it never ought to be, as sculpture and painting are closely connected in their object, however widely differing in the means

they take to achieve it, but) but if it were so, if pictures alone were the object of the traveller's pursuit, Florence, Bologna, and Venice would yield him a richer harvest, I think, than Rome at least I was conscious of a more lively degree of pleasure from this source in each of these cities than I have been here. But this may possibly be owing to the immense, uncountable, indescribable accumulation of all sorts of treasures here. I suppose that the faculty of enjoyment, like all our other faculties, is limited, and that people who indulge themselves in roaming about the halls of the Vatican day after day, till they not only know all its most precious jewels *by heart*, but have so pampered their eyes by the perfection of detail, from the paw of a dog to the head of a man, that nothing short of this perfection can content them I suppose that all people, in such a case, become most unreasonably *exigeante*, and feel languid, by comparison, even in the galleries of a Borghese or a Doria.

On the same day that I saw my happy young countrywomen at the Vatican, we turned, as usual, into the church the church of churches, as we came out. The difficulty, by the way, with which we have sometimes avoided doing this, when pressing engagements called us elsewhere, has been greater than it is easy to describe or to *believe*. To understand this, it is absolutely necessary to have been under the portico of St. Peter's

when it was very particularly inconvenient to go farther. . . . On the day of which I have been speaking, however, we had half an hour to spare, and spent it, of course, in the enjoyment of our marble Paradise and there, extremely to my satisfaction, I found that the same party of sight-seers I had observed in the gallery had arrived before us. I would have given a good deal to have seen these brown little girls look about them here for the first time but although I did not enjoy this pleasure for it was very evident that this was *not* their first visit, I had a very satisfactory opportunity of judging how they *liked it* and that without any risk of appearing to watch them. . . . For if the never-changing temperature of this inconceivable edifice be accounted a mystery, the manner in which all the human beings which you meet in it seem to dwindle and melt away before your eyes may well be accounted another. Having determined, however, to watch how the spirits of these young girls were moved, I contrived, for a little while, not to lose sight of them ; but there was not the slightest danger that they, in return, should keep sight of me. . . . That this was not the first visit of the party to St. Peter's was proved, in the first instance, by the father and mother, who very quietly and composedly deposited themselves on a seat near the Stuart monument, which, I verily believe, is the only one in the church, and which is placed there, I conceive, for

the accommodation of the men stationed to receive the orders that admit people to the roof, for the staircase opens almost close beside it. Having seen their parents thus comfortably disposed of, the two girls walked off towards the Sacra Confessione and then I received another proof that they had been there before ; for the manner in which they looked round them had nothing in it of that first gaping *ebahissement* in which pleasure is swallowed up in wonder their feelings were evidently *all delight*. They advanced slowly and silently, hand in hand (not arm in arm that would have spoilt the thing completely), like the pretty pictures we have seen of the two children in the wood ; and as they approached the awful dome looked up, and drew a long deep breath, that I well knew was inhaling, as it were, a draught of ecstasy and then I looked up too, and followed their eyes as they slowly and luxuriously turned them from point to point, rather than from object to object, as if they wished, as nearly as it might be possible, to receive into their spirits all the unspeakable sublimity at once.

I declare to you that the watching these two young creatures, thus kindling, almost at the very verge of childhood, into this high-wrought consciousness of beauty, majesty, and splendour, was one of the greatest treats I have had. Had they spoken to each other, I should have lost all my sympathy, but their silence, and the sort of solemn

quietness of their two young faces, had something exceedingly impressive in it. Moreover, it seemed to awaken again all my own delight, and I became, if possible, more convinced than ever of the fact, that human hands never reared any other work that could bear comparison with this.

In looking at all the other edifices that I have the most admired, I have been able, in some degree, to analyze the charm. . . . I could say why it was that I admired Winchester more than Salisbury; or the Piccolo St. Denis more than the Maestosa Notre Dame but in St. Peter's I can only feel that I am looking at what is more beautiful than all that I have ever looked at before, and have no power whatever of saying in detail *why* it is so. Even now, after all the hours I have spent beneath its roof, I am at a loss to guess how it is that the light is in every part so perfect I remember no windows, and like some pictures I have seen, it seems to have some mysterious source of light within itself.

“ Si che ogni parte ad ogni parte splende,
Distribuendo ugualmente la luce.”

In short, St. Peter's church at Rome is a miracle, and one to which the most stubborn of heretics cannot refuse to give faith.

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One of the houses at which I visit, on the Pincio Hill, or at any rate on the elevation which,

by whatever name it may be called, certainly makes part of it, is the Casa Dei, where some people say that Poussin lived for many years. But another informant assured me that Poussin died in a much smaller house, still on the Pincio, and one which looks greatly more likely to have been his dwelling. At no great distance from either are shown the houses of Salvator Rosa and of Claude Lorraine; but, of the three, this last is the only one whose works seem, like those of Titian, to be absolutely tinted by the atmosphere in which he lived. Look out from the Pincio Hill at sunset, and you will find whence it was that Claude borrowed his broad sunshine and his amber skies.

I marvel how it is that the French, who dislike being laughed at more than any nation, I believe, except the Americans, I greatly marvel how they can lay themselves open to the jokes and jestings likely to follow upon their classing and placing Poussin among their native artists. . . . This great master passed forty-two years of his life at Rome, and might quite as well be called Dutch as French, for any claim he has to be classed as belonging to the school of either. . . . And yet perhaps, in after years, England will probably be guilty of the same weakness, and her dictionaries and her catalogues will tell that Gibson was an English sculptor. . . . though, in truth, they will hardly have any better right to do so than France has to call Poussin French.

The fact is, however; that the absurdity in the latter case arises from the very peculiarly *un-french* style of this great historic artist; whereas the same *incongruity*, as I may almost call it, does not exist in the case of Gibson for though I am quite ready to allow that neither Gibson nor any other man could, or at any rate *would*, have produced such works as he has done, unless they had lived, and looked, and thought, and dreamed, as he has done, amidst the models which surround him here, it is still an inspiration that he might have caught wherever the works of ancient Greece could have been made to become the daily aliment of his eyes and his imagination for Rome has nothing to do with these works, save that she acquired them by a strong hand, and preserves them with a careful one; but the case is different with regard to Poussin. Not all the pictures in the world, not even if an arch-thief as mighty as Napoleon could have been set to work for him, could have made him what he was, had he not lived and laboured among the *living* models, and the pellucid atmosphere, of Rome. Not, indeed, that Poussin, like Claude, has ever, as far as I remember, attempted to portray the glowing sunset or sunrise of Italy; but nevertheless there is a purity of light in his pictures, which, almost as plainly as the classic elegance of his forms, bespeaks both the school and the school-room in which he studied.

LETTER XXI.

Freedom of Speech among the lower Orders at Rome, and among nearly all Classes elsewhere. — Intellectual Revolution in Progress. — Great Necessity for popular Education. — Environs of Rome. — Villa of Mr. Mills and the Villa of the Aqueduct. — Statues by Torch-light, seen with Mr. Gibson. — The Laocoon. — Canova — The Apollo. — The Nile. — The Torso. — The Head of Jupiter. — Effect of the Lights on the Staircase. — Farewell Visit to the Coliseum and its Neighbourhood. — Farewell Contemplation of ancient Rome.

Rome, December, 1841.

HOWEVER closely the subjects of the state of Rome may be watched, they certainly do not appear to live in any great fear respecting what they say, for every peasant, every conductor, every chance traveller you meet, seems ready enough to enter into conversation with very perfect freedom upon any subject, whenever it may be your wish to speak to him; nor is there the least difficulty, I think, in any part of Italy of finding also persons of education who appear perfectly willing to communicate their opinions, let them be of what nature they may. Excepting in the Roman States and at Naples, I heard no complaints any where concerning positive physical evils arising from existing institutions. . . . With a wonderful and most pro-

vidential elasticity, man accommodates himself to the condition in which he is placed ; and race after race is born, which continues to drag on existence under circumstances which to others would appear intolerable But yet I am very perfectly convinced that the *war against thought* is a very idle struggle ; and that however peaceably external affairs may appear to go on, the intellectual revolution of Italy is already much too far advanced to be stopped and any very violent attempts to do so would only hasten the events that are so greatly dreaded. Fortunately for the peace of the world, however, there appears to be less inclination to do battle against power than against ignorance. In fact, the more any civilised people advance in knowledge, the more they feel the necessity of power, and the more readily they yield to it ; but not so, of an enforced subjection to ignorance. . . . It is painful to meditate on the state of mind in which the statesmen of southern Italy must, for years past, have been proceeding in their hopeless labours. It were a sin to doubt that many of them are, and have been, actuated by the honourable wish to perform the tasks assigned them well and honestly. . . . But how is this to be done ? I heartily sympathise in the horror that pervades the minds of all honest and experienced statesmen at the idea of popular revolution. The experiment has been often made, and in no case have its evils been atoned for by the result ; for where its mis-

chiefs have been most speedily remedied, it has invariably been *by the nearest possible return to the former order of things*. . . . the tyranny of demagogues being UNIFORMLY found to be the most intolerable tyranny of all. Many a good man has felt himself called upon by duty to shut his eyes closely, rather than see how fearfully the rust of defective institutions was eating into the strength and the happiness of his country. . . . and thus it is, that, to avoid one overwhelming evil, a multitude of minor ones are submitted to. . . . yet it is plain to see that this system, if strictly adhered to, must lead at length not to order, but decay.

I have heard more than one patriotic Italian of the south express a wish that the weakness of their country might be turned to strength by the placing an Austrian archduke at the head of a constitutional monarchy. . . . and as I listened to them, I could not but remember the very similar feeling of Dante, when, in the midst of his Ghibiline detestation of Italian tyranny, he defended the power of empire in his well-known treatise "*De Monarchia*."

The philosophical spirits of Italy are much to be pitied, for they are before their age; and though they may, and must be, very certain that the age will follow them, it needs a very sublime abnegation of self to watch contentedly a process of which the result is probably beyond their day. . . . nevertheless, these men all know, and for the most

part are ready to allow, that it must be by education, and not by revolution, that amendment must come. The best immediate hope for Italy lies in the chance that, in this age of thinking, some individual *having authority* may conceive the idea that it is not by sustaining what is decayed, but by turning to profit what is strong, that improvement as well as safety may be looked for An enormous weight of ignorance might be very safely removed from off the lower orders of the Italian people, without any danger of such an intellectual outbreak at Rome as might produce a Dante, to scare the Propaganda with his thrilling truths yet even Dante did his Florence no harm.

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The power of driving at will for a few miles beyond the walls of Rome is not the least pleasure of abiding in it not that I can call the country immediately around it *beautiful*, according to the ordinary ideas attached to this epithet when applied to scenery; but if it has not fertile fields, and abounding rivers if no majestic forest lends its shade, and no towering height its dignity if, in a word, it ought not to be termed beautiful, it may, very safely, be described as *enchanted*. . . . There is not a single step that has not its peculiar interest; and while the fancy throws her own bewitching mind-beams on every crumbling arch and isolated column, the light of heaven takes a tint, unknown elsewhere, that

gives to every object a charm unspeakable, but which sober truth shrinks from describing, because she can find no words, at once precise and strong, that may do it justice. . . . The villa of Mr. Mills is exactly the spot that a scholar might dream of, as that on which he would best love to dwell ; and there is another suburban mansion, whose name I stupidly forget, wherein, while passing along its passages, you are treading the roof of an aqueduct. The view from both these spots has in it a most special enchantment, and really can be compared to nothing else in the world.

Besides driving about to look at lights and shades, however, I beg you to believe that I have seen, and am seeing, a vast deal more than I have time and space to tell you of. . . . But why should I recite the names of endless palaces, and of temples sufficient to turn my page into a Pantheon ? You know all their names already, my friend, and I can teach you nothing more. . . . Did I descant upon the frescoes, I know I should only shock your feelings for even the Aurora of Guido gave more pain to my neck than pleasure to my eyes for the graceful composition I knew by heart before ; and if it has not been painted over from end to end more than once, damp does not do the same work at Rome that it does elsewhere.

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Perhaps the greatest treat I have yet enjoyed in Rome was going to see the statues in the Vati-

can, by torch-light. Be not so presumptuous as to fancy that this is merely a trick, a toy, a prettiness . . . it is a very different sort of business, believe me ; and *literally* brings to light, even to the most unpractised eye, that which, without it, would escape all but the most accomplished sculptors. A *portion* of the enchantment produced by this visit to the Vatican by torch-light may, indeed, be easily understood by any one who will give himself the trouble of imagining the effect of a walk through the long and lofty halls of the Vatican, between rows of pale immortals, “ instant seen, and instant gone,” as you pass. . . . It may be easy to fancy that the concentrated light of two dozen waxen torches, bound together in one sheaf, and carefully concealed from the eye of the spectator, may produce some strange illusions amidst this world of deathless loveliness . . . but it requires something more than fancy to comprehend the extraordinary air of life which this partial, one-sided illumination produces, when skilfully applied to individual statues.

When surrounded on all sides by light equally powerful, or very nearly so, a statue, even of the very highest finish, if not representing strong action, shows but imperfectly that marvellous mimicry of life which art can communicate to stone. But this artificial light, if properly managed, communicates such seeming softness, and such breathing animation, to the rugged material

thus mysteriously metamorphosed, that one almost fears to touch the dainty limbs, lest one might bruise them. I will not venture to assert that the magic effect of this manœuvring would have been as great if we had *not* had the good fortune of being accompanied by Mr. Gibson, to regulate the flashes of this Promethean fire but under his command, a soft clear-obscure is made to follow the delicate workings of the chisel, and then, and then only, is it that the full perfection of the work becomes revealed. It is useless to indulge in wordiness upon this singular effect to be fully understood it must explain itself but any one who has watched the effect of the morning or evening light upon the rugged sides of a distant mountain, and observed how that which seems to be smooth and unindented one minute becomes craggy and cavernous the next, as the light passes over it, may, perhaps, in some degree, comprehend the phenomenon.

Our accomplished cicerone commanded our pillar of light to stand still before all the greater glories of the collection and never surely did three hours pass so rapidly.

The object which appeared to me to gain most by this mode of exhibition was the Laocoon. Till I saw it thus, I confess to having been sadly insensible to its transcendant power; but by the magic of this *new light*, it came upon me in a manner that I cannot venture to describe. The

principal figure, upon which the eye should be taught to rest, without troubling itself about any thing else, appeared to me *then* to be the most inconceivable triumph of human genius that I ever beheld but most assuredly it must be seen by torch-light to make this fully evident.

Canova is said to have been the first among the moderns who conceived the idea of thus looking at statues ; but there is no doubt that the Romans enjoyed it, as it is very evident, from the positions in which some of the finest antique statues have been found, that they could have had no other light. . . . It is a striking proof of the value set on this immortal figure of Laocoon by its guardians, that it is placed side by side with the Apollo, in the prohibition which forbids the approach of plaster. Every marble in the Vatican, *save the Laocoon and the Apollo*, may have casts taken from them, upon application being made to the proper authorities. . . . In the propriety of this prohibition all the world must agree ; for all the world has an interest in the preservation of what it seems idle to hope can ever be equalled by the hand of man. I see no rational cause to doubt that extensive excavations, carried on with boldness, care, and skill, in the neighbourhood of Naples and of Rome, would bring to light very much that is excellent in art, and precious from antiquity ; but with all my faith in digging, I anticipate no more Apollos no more Laocoons.

Canova holds a place of high honour at the Vatican. His Persius which, with a good deal of hyperbolical admiration, was set upon the vacant pedestal of the Apollo, and named the *Consolatrice*, during the short-lived possession of the chef-d'œuvre by France together with his two famous Wrestlers, occupy one of the four cabinets in the portico of the court of the Vatican gallery the three others being occupied by the Meleager the Laocoon and the Apollo. Were I the ghost of Canova, I would incessantly haunt the pope, the seventy-two cardinals, the Cav. Fabris, and all the custode of the Vatican, major and minor, till these three admirable works were placed where they would not be brought into such very cruel competition with the wonders of the world.

The Apollo was not, as it seemed to me, one of the figures which profited the most by the torch-light. I had admired it so heartily before, perhaps, that it was impossible I could admire it more. The colossal Nile, with its sixteen skipping Fairies (so very like Gulliver and the Lilliputians), though always eloquent with a sort of fanciful poetry, had something unspeakably mysterious and striking when flashed upon, first in one direction and then in another, by our wonder-working light and so, in good truth, had THE Torso which, like the Laocoon, then came for the first time with full force upon my eyes and my

understanding. How fully I believe the story about Michael Angelo's being taken to touch this peerless fragment with his hands, when the sight of his eyes failed him! It is said that Michael Angelo was wont to call this colossal morsel, "il mio maestro" and this, too, I can believe and I could fancy, if I dared to fancy any thing upon such a subject, that the strongly-developed muscles in the arm of the reposing Moses as well as some similar details in the chapel of the tombs at Florence, are the products of this pupilage.

The great Head of Jove, in the circular room, actually made me tremble from head to foot, when all the power and might of the countenance was brought out by the skilful application of the torches. . . . What terrible tricks might be played upon weak nerves among these god-like marbles if all circumstances of light and darkness, and surprise and mystery, were made the most of! But I must not go on enumerating all the things that the taste of our admirable cicerone commanded to stand forth on this occasion or my letter would never be finished. Should you, however, ever be happy enough to find yourself in the halls of the Vatican by torch-light, fail not to remark the magical effect of the lights upon the staircase leading from the circular hall. It is the closing scene of the drama, and will send you away in a fine dreamy state of mind, that may

make you feel doubtful whether the last hours have been passed on earth, in heaven, or in the shades below.

I must repeat that this exhibition gave me more delight than any other I have seen at Rome but if I say Rome, when speaking of such like sights, need I add the world also? Yes, this view of the statues by torch-light is what I have most completely enjoyed — and thus my letter about it is a *rondo*.

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We had hoped to have seen also that other magical lighting up for which Rome is famous namely, the Coliseum by moonlight. We have the moonlight certainly, and bright enough it is, though within but a day or two of Christmas but we have had heavy showers, and the place is the very dampest in Rome so prudence gets the better of poetry, and we give it up. We would not, however, give up our last look at the majestic ruin, and all that surrounds it, and we have this morning passed a melancholy sort of hour or two there and I gathered a handful of acanthus leaves, which nestle between the fragments as if there were some natural affinity between them and then we wandered about the Palatine hill, among the traces of Cæsar's palace and the Orti Farnesiani. Here I made acquaintance with a gardener, and purchased sundry garden seeds and then we descended

with torches to the pretty gilt-roofed baths of Livia and then we stood on the beautiful terrace that overlooks Rome and its Campagna, with the Coliseum and its surrounding columns and arches almost at our feet ; and from this spot it was that we bade adieu to ancient Rome, — for the few days we have still left to pass here are so crammed full of engagements for morning, noon, and night, that we cannot hope to get to this favourite quarter again. We made the carriage follow us as we retreated by the Via Sacra, and walked over the old pavement, and stood before every column, and under every arch, with a very disagreeable consciousness of the doubt that rested upon our ever finding ourselves there again.

LETTER XXII.

The Papal Mass on Christmas Day at St. Peter's. — The College of Cardinals. — Rank of Bishop hereditary in some Roman Families. — Simplicity of the Pope's Manner of Living. — Anecdote. — Cardinal Géraumb. — His appeal to the Abbé de la Mennais. — Anecdotes. — Villa Ludovisi. — Group of Petus and Arie. — Ceiling by Guercino. — The Chevalier Campana's Collection. — Tomb of a Baker at the Porto Maggiore. — The Pope at the Church of St. Ignatius. — Private Theatricals. — Final Ball.

Rome, December, 1841.

A PAPAL mass is certainly a solemn spectacle, despite all that can be said about mummary, and so forth. I am quite aware that it might easily be made more solemn still, and that, merely by leaving out a little of the toilet business. I shall never be able to comprehend how people who have so long studied, and so well understand producing striking scenic effect by their ceremonies, can continue to think that the dressing, and undressing, of an old gentleman by his servants can have any thing solemn and impressive in it. This part of the ceremonies, however, was not new to me. I have seen the same thing done at the inauguration of a bishop in Flanders, which, but for this, would have been a most dignified and imposing service but the whole thing, as

far as this putting on and putting off of garments was concerned was, and is, and ever must be, essentially ludicrous.

It was necessary in order to secure good places on Christmas day to go to St. Peter's very early, and this we did, putting our breakfast *in non cale*; but were quite sufficiently rewarded for it, by getting excellent places in the tribune erected for strangers. The procession is the same as at Easter, and is considered, I am told, to be the finest in the world. It certainly would exceed my powers to imagine any thing finer. The imperial procession at Vienna on Easter day, when the elements are borne back, in state and triumph, to the altar from whence they were removed on Good Friday, was in one particular more brilliant, inasmuch as the Empress, and all the ladies of her court, in full dress, and covered with jewels, make a part of it; but this, as you will readily imagine, is more than atoned for here by the unequalled splendour of the locale, and the enormous multitude of the assistants. The pope, the cardinals, the bishops, and the priests of Rome, all decorated in the most stately habits of their most stately ceremonial the noble guard of honour in full dress the Swiss troops the same, the princely-looking patriarch, the meek contrast of the numerous monks, together with the closely packed and perfectly well-dressed crowd, which covered every inch of the floor of St. Peter's, like a new

mosaic, composed a spectacle which really seemed almost worthy of the place wherein it was displayed.

I should say that the loss of music under such a roof was a very heavy one, were it not that the startling blast of the trumpets when the Pope is borne into the church, and again when he raises the elements before the people, has something in it so unwonted, and so soul-subduing, that I would not give it in exchange for anything.

Nothing can exceed the steadiness of step, and of general movement, with which the men walk who bear the papal chair upon their shoulders; but His Holiness, nevertheless, looked alarmingly pale during the time he was thus borne aloft, and I was told that he is invariably ill after it The continued act of blessing the multitude, though not demanding much exertion, was evidently not performed without difficulty, and I watched the gentle-looking old man with anxiety, as he was borne past us, thinking it extremely likely that he might faint, and fall. But whatever was the sensation produced by this movement, it certainly did not long leave any ill effects, for I have rarely heard a voice of equal power, from one who had reached the age given to His Holiness. He performed his part of the office admirably. But here again, as at the Sistine Chapel, the effect produced by the approach of every cardinal separately, to bend before him, and receive

his benediction in return, was exceedingly injurious to the religious solemnity of the scene . . . the religious part of the service bears no fitting proportion to it.

The pageant was in some sort prolonged after we quitted the church, which we did not attempt to do till the state carriages were all departed; and then, by following immediately behind them, we saw the entire line turn before us over the bridge of St. Angelo, producing, notwithstanding the almost grotesque effect occasioned by three, and in many cases by four laquais crowded on the monkey-board, a very stately show.

The cardinals rank, I am told, as princes of the empire, and are, for the most part, though not always, nor of necessity, of noble birth. Many noble Roman families have hereditary right to the rank of bishop in the church, if they choose to claim it; and it not unfrequently happens that a young nobleman's career begins with setting the honours of the sacred college before him, whose after life is turned in a direction totally different; though it must be remembered that all cardinals are not priests. When the college is full, its number amounts to seventy-two; but this number is at present not complete. Several new cardinals are at this time about to be added to the college . . . one of whom is an English gentleman of the name of Weld, and another the noble young Swartzenberg, Archbishop of Saltzberg, and Primate of Austria.

The revenue which a cardinal receives from the State is eleven hundred pounds sterling per annum : but at present very many among them receive nothing ; the poverty of the Propaganda coffers being such as to render this forbearance an important act of patriotism. There has been of late years, I am told, a great falling off in the state and style in which these high-ranked priests were wont to live ; how much of this may be owing to impoverished means, and how much to the distaste for worldly magnificence attributed to the present amiable sovereign, it is impossible to say. The personal expenses of the present Pope are chiefly confined, they say, to making additions to the Vatican library for nothing can be more simple than his manner of living I was told that when the wish to be presented, expressed by the party of English of which myself and my son made part, was mentioned to His Holiness, he said, " Why should they wish it ? Would they look at me as at a curious animal in a menagerie ? " " They wish to wait upon your Holiness as the Sovereign of the country they are visiting " was the reply " I am more a monk " returned the venerable pontiff " nevertheless, I am willing to receive them."

Among the cardinals there is one to whom I had a strong desire to be presented, and the honour was promised me but this celebrated

individual (the Cardinal Géramb) was not at Rome during my stay. My curiosity, for so I must call the wish I have expressed, arose, in the first instance, from the remarkable transitions through which he has passed for I remember him as the dashing Baron Géramb, of London and Paris, and who does not remember him as becoming a member of La Trappe? But besides this, his book, recounting the adventures of his journey to Rome, interested me; and there is one passage in a letter to the celebrated Abbé de la Mennais, which is inserted in it, that I was especially struck with. In this letter he remonstrates with him, in a tone of very affectionate gentleness, upon the mischief and the misery to which his heresies are sure to lead himself, and every body who listens to him; and he urges him, with all the eloquence of earnestness, to accompany himself to Rome, and to the feet of the Pontiff he tells him that he is convinced—
“Que pas une nuit ne s’écoule, où, seul avec votre génie, votre nom, et votre célébrité, vous n’enviez le sort du dernier frère ignorantin du dernier village de France” To this earnest appeal, however, the Abbé de la Mennais did not vouchsafe to return any answer whatever.

But although I had not the good fortune to see the Père Géramb, I heard several anecdotes of him, but all of a gay and cheerful character, and such as to lead one equally to wonder at his ever

taking a vow of silence, and to rejoice at the expediency (which has been of course dictated by the interests of the Church) for relaxing, in his case, the severity of this vow.

A Roman Catholic bishop told me that when standing next to him one day in the Pope's antichamber, waiting for admittance, the illustrious Trappist said to him,

"Do you know, Monsignore, why my beard (which he wore very long) is so much whiter than my hair?"

"No" was, of course, the reply.

"Then I will tell you," said G ramb. "It is because I work more with my jaws than with my head."

Upon another occasion, when walking in a procession which rendered it necessary that he should carry a candle, some one observed to him that the one he bore was longer than all the rest. . . . "That," replied the stout cardinal, "is in order that the candle may match the candlestick."

There would be little interest in words so light and slight as these, did they not form a link, if I may so express myself, in the chain of character of this very remarkable man. All the Roman Catholics with whom I have spoken about him appear to respect him highly, and to entertain the most perfect conviction of his sincerity in the new course of life upon which he has entered; but while yielding implicit credence to this statement, it is

curious still to remark a shade of the same whimsicality which he displayed on so many occasions during the earlier part of his life. Far, however, from leading to any inference injurious to his sincerity, I think such anecdotes have very decidedly a contrary tendency. If the Trappist cardinal were a hypocrite, he would be too cautious to be jocose. . . . The very worst that can be said on the subject is, that it suggests the idea of what we familiarly call "*a bee in the bonnet.*"

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The Ludovisi villa should be visited without fail by all who can obtain permission, which has, however, for some years past been difficult, in consequence of an injury done to one of the most precious sculptures by a little boy, taken, very unwisely, by an English party, to look at what was doubtless *caviare* to him in the way of enjoyment, and incapable of affording him amusement of any kind excepting in the way of mischief. . . . But a family of English, almost become Roman, who have most kindly befriended us on many occasions, did so on this, and, under the escort of a very distinguished bishop, we saw this seemingly forsaken, but very interesting villa. The lovely group of Petus and Arie (or by whatever other name the contentious critics may prefer to call it) deserves all that has been said of it. It was upon a finger of this precious marble that our luckless little countryman tried his strength and his dexterity,

and, unhappily, succeeded in breaking it off. . . . There is also in this small, but rich gallery, a figure to which they have given the name of "Mars in repose," which I thought admirable; and a group of a mother and son equally so. . . . There are many more besides of distinguished excellence; but you know my aversion to a catalogue. In a very damp-looking garden room belonging to this villa is a ceiling by Guercino, that gave me much more pleasure than the Aurora of Guido, the reason being that it has not been so *brilliantly* repaired.

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Another of the *last lions* we are likely to see we have just now been to visit. . . . This is the Chevalier Campana's unequalled collection of antique ornaments, found among the buried ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and in various scavi made by himself and others in the neighbourhood of Rome. Some of these ornamental works in clay are of a beauty of design which is perfectly enchanting, even in the slight traceries surrounding a medallion or a panel; while some of the subjects represented in relief are of the highest antiquarian interest, from their historic designs. The Chevalier possesses likewise a perfectly unique and most splendid collection of ornaments in gold filagree of the finest imaginable workmanship, and brought forth from the same deeply-hidden recesses . . . which, while they hid, preserved also

what never could have reached us in the same perfect state if the earth itself had not rolled over them, and formed the long-enduring walls of their cabinet. . . . Having spent many years, and a very considerable fortune in making this collection, the Chevalier is now engaged in publishing a work of great antiquarian interest and very learned research upon the subject of these wonderful relics.

A newly discovered tomb outside the walls of Rome, but close to the Porto Maggiore, gives a very splendid idea of the wealth and high pretensions of the working classes among the citizens. It is, beyond all possibility of mistake, the tomb of a baker, being covered on all sides by implements and emblems of his trade ; yet it is in a style of splendour that in these degenerate days might suffice to do honour to the resting-place of a king. . . . As a sample of manners and customs, I think this tomb is one of the most curious things I have seen. . . . After examining this, we determined upon taking another last look from the beautiful terrace of Mr. Mills, and drove up the steep ascent accordingly. . . . This view is a sort of epitome of Rome, being made up of bright sky, roses, ruins, domes, columns, cypress, orange, the wide campagna, and an external setting of rainbow-tinted hills in the distance. We looked out upon all this . . . and then turned away for the last time . . . and went home to dress for dinner, with what appetite we might.

I forget on what day it was, but some time since Christmas, we attended another of the musical services at the three-organed church of the Jesuits not, however, for the purpose of hearing the music, but in order to see the Pope return his solemn thanks before the altar tomb of St. Ignatius for all the blessings of the past year. This is a private ceremony, that is to say, Gregory the Sixteenth comes not there in his character of Pope, but as a private individual. A good deal of ceremony, nevertheless, is, of course, observed, and the sight was altogether rather interesting. There was one feature in the ceremonial which puzzled me greatly, nor have I been able to find any one who is able to explain it. . . . His Holiness did not enter the church till after the long musical service was over, and the three organs at peace ; and then he entered, very quietly, by a side door, almost close to the altar. When we first took our places among the reserved seats round this altar, the silver statue of the Saint was not visible, being concealed, as usual, by the picture which is always placed before it, excepting upon occasions of high solemnity. But soon after the service began, this veiling picture dropped, and the Saint stood in all his precious jewelled splendour before us. . . . Exactly, however, at the moment that the little side door was opened for the entrance of the Pope, up flew the picture again, and the statue was hid. Now, why might not the Pope see the silver statue

of St. Ignatius? Was it upon the principle that —

“ Two stars hold not their courses in one sphere ? ”

I felt most completely in the dark, and so I feel still.

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30th December, 1841.

We had proposed leaving Rome immediately after the ceremonies of Christmas, but have been tempted to stay a few days longer, on the invitation of a very talented and every way charming Roman lady (married to an English gentleman, but still resident in Rome), who, on the last day of the year, intends to fit up her drawing-room as a little theatre, and regale her friends with what I am assured by many is in its way the greatest treat in Rome namely, the performing herself, assisted by one or two of her friends, in two petites pièces the first, “ *La Collerica*,” translated from Scribe, and the second, “ *La Villana Contessa*” of Goldoni. . . . If you had heard one quarter as much as I have done of the dramatic talent of this charming person, you would not wonder at our delaying our departure a little, even though we have Milan to see before we recross the Alps, and that we are pretty considerably anxious to be beforehand with the snow, or rather without the snow, upon their summits. This performance is to take place to-morrow after it is over, which is expected to be about midnight, we adjourn to a ball in honour of the new year, at the mansion of Mr. B——, and there we expect to

meet pretty nearly all the English in Rome, which will enable us to say "at once good night."

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Rome, 1st January, 1842.

Eh, bien! our theatrical treat is over . . . and I very heartily wish it were going to begin again. . . . This charming Madame Locher is surely one of the most brightly-gifted little creatures that ever lived! . . . I perfectly well remember Mrs. Jordan, and the only performance which ever reminded me of hers was that of Madame L—— last night . . . the same beautiful ease, conveying the idea, first, that she is not acting at all, and next, when you remember that in this first idea you are mistaken, and that what you are looking at is certainly only acting . . . you become persuaded that the animated performer is only playing for her own amusement, without being conscious that any body is looking at her . . . or thinking at all about it, if they were. . . I have never before seen any thing in private acting at all approaching this in excellence, and very little in public acting either. . . The ball too, which followed, was exactly every thing that a ball ought to be . . . nevertheless, the number of agreeable people I met there . . . to see them perhaps for the last time . . . made it rather a mournful one to me.

To-morrow, I think, we shall do little else than pack, pay bills, and such-like farewell operations all the morning; and in the evening we are to start with the mail post for Florence . . . and so, farewell to Rome!

LETTER XXIII.

Answer of the Courier of the Malle Poste. — Departure from Rome. — Severe Frost. — Arrival at Florence. — Pleasant Rest there. — Departure for Bologna. — Miserable Weather. — Equestrian Statues at Piacenza. — Difficult crossing of the Po. — Milan. — The Duomo. — Its disfiguring Front. — Leonardo da Vinci's last Supper. — The Church of St. Ambrosio. — The Picture Gallery. — Triumphal Arch leading from the Simplon. — Theatre of La Scala. — Mademoiselle Loöwe. — Departure from Milan. — Arrived at Turin.

Milan, January, 1842.

THOUGH by no means in a merry mood at the moment of leaving Rome, we could not help smiling at the pithy answer of the mail guard, when some observation was made to him concerning the difference in the time arrangements between the Roman mails and those of London . . . the man looked very gravely at T—— for a moment, shook his head, and then said, “*Ingleterra e lo stato Romano sono due cose moltissimi differenti.*” We certainly did not feel in any degree tempted to contradict him; and perhaps there was something in the tone of the observation, as well as in the truth of it, which tended to reconcile us to the homeward path we were commencing, even

though it led us away from the Eternal City and all its glories.

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Though no snow had yet fallen, we saw symptoms enough of winter, as we left the town, to convince us that we had delayed quite long enough. . . . The carts of the confectioners were busily employed in conveying ice, and we remarked blocks of at least two inches in thickness, and looking as firm and as dry as any that I ever saw in our cold England . . . yet the air was still bright and beautiful, nor was it till the following day that we began to feel disagreeably conscious that we were, contrary to a very wise command, making our flight in the winter. By the time we reached Florence, however, sleet and rain were falling together heavily; and the universal prophecy was, that snow, the prime terror of Alpine travellers, would be sure to follow. . . . But we again found ourselves among a multitude of pleasant friends, and were *domicilie* with some who knew not only how to make "a July day short as December," but also to make us forget that January was not May . . . and so, we lingered on for ten very delightful days; and we saw again many that we wished to see . . . and we took another look at the Venus, but felt no danger therefrom of being led to forget the Apollo. We took also another look at our friend Power and his Eve, when I had the very great delight of hearing

that two copies of the fair mother had been ordered *in marble*. . . . and then, too, we learned how much we had lost by the absence of Lord and Lady H—— during our former visit but all this, like all other pleasant things, came to an end and all that was left us was to say farewell, and set forth upon a miserably cold, wet, and snowy journey to Bologna and then we discovered that winter can be winter still, even in Italy.

And “oh! the heavy change!” We could not even pause long enough to catch a glance at St. Cecilia, to comfort us, but hurried onward shivering and shivering to this place, through as vile roads, and in as miserable weather, as it is well possible to imagine.

The only thing en route which roused me to sufficient energy to look about me, with something like admiration, were two equestrian statues at Piacenza, bronze and colossal, upon which the wreaths of snow hung in dismal garlands, giving such an air of stern misery to the sable giants as rendered them extremely picturesque. The piazza too, in which they stood, looked handsome, notwithstanding the miserable aspect under which we saw it.

I began to think near this same town of Piacenza that the Po would, after all, be the death of us; for though it was neither a pont volant, nor a ford, but a bridge of boats, by which we were

to pass it, the business was not performed without considerable difficulty, in consequence of the quantity of snow which had fallen, and which had already drifted sufficiently to render oxen necessary before we could be dragged through it. We were above an hour passing this very clumsy substitute for a bridge, and notwithstanding the man at the toll-bar did his very best to blow up a chafing-dish of expiring embers into something like warmth, I was almost frozen. . . . It may be that the heat of last summer has left me more susceptible to cold, but I never remember to have suffered so much from severity of weather. . . . Right glad was I, believe me, to reach this city, which though, comparatively speaking, but a short stage of the whole distance from Rome to Cumberland, is yet a stage and besides I have at least the satisfaction of knowing that I have passed the Po, which, after thrice seeing how troublesome it can make itself in rough weather, is a very considerable comfort.

This Milano is a very fine city, and its Duomo deserving, if not quite all, at least the major part of the boundless admiration which I have heard bestowed upon it. But in order to allow this, it is necessary, I confess, to approach it from behind, or sideways, or to descend from a balloon upon its noble roof or any way, in short, except meeting it face to face, and at one glance taking in all the barbarous incongruity of its un-

worthy frontal. When lamenting, as I perpetually did at Florence, the unfinished fronts of nearly all the churches there, I little guessed that in standing before what is decidedly much more beautiful than any of them, I should lament not finding it in the same condition.

Smellfungus people, who love to torment themselves, will be sure to stand very long before this front; and carefully avoiding to remark the marble richness of its detail, come away at last with the satisfactory conviction that it would be pretty nearly impossible to employ the materials worse. . . . by way of finishing one of the most superb Gothic cathedrals in the world. But the more amiable anti-smellfungusites will turn away, as we did, as soon as they have taken a look at it, and either walk round the church, or into the church, or over the church, whichever way they may choose first, taking good care to do it all in turn. . . . and they will be rewarded for their amiability; for they will behold much that is beautiful, and some points that are really glorious. . . . Any thing, indeed, more noble than a well-chosen view of this dazzling marble structure, it is difficult to conceive. It is stupendous in size, peerlessly rich in detail, and most noble in effect. . . . nor is the fact that I like the minster at Cologne better any evidence that the Duomo at Milan is not (as it has repeatedly been called) the finest Gothic cathedral in the world. For, in the first place,

all that portion of judgment which is derived from science is utterly wanting to render my opinion valid and in the next, fancy, or perhaps, in plainer English still, *caprice*, has too much to do with it; I am afraid, to make my preference of any worth. . . . It is egregious folly, I confess, at any rate, to stand before the marble wonder of Lombardy, and instead of enjoying it fully, wholly, and without permitting a thought to wander away from it, to suffer "la folle de la maison" to run off with you to Cologne, and doat upon its mouldering pinnacles instead.

Of all the make-believes in architecture that I ever saw, the ceiling of the Milan cathedral is the best. . . . How glorious would a church be that should be thus finished in stone! But here again I stand self-convicted of incorrigible perversity. To stand within the church of Milan and speculate upon what might be, instead of enjoying what was! This came of my looking up in the first instance towards the west end. . . . However, I turned round and got away from it very speedily, and then I certainly did enjoy it and as a proof that I was not incorrigible in perversity, I beg to assure you that when, after long wanderings, I had to return to this miserable west end of the magnificent edifice, I did it by walking backwards for the detestable front is as bad within side as without. On leaving the building too, we took the greatest care to look at it

again outside, in every direction but the wrong one, nor did we leave it at last till satisfactorily convinced that it was one of the finest churches in the world.

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From the cathedral we drove to the *Cænaculum*, as Leonardo's fast-fading fresco is affectedly called; and of all the fading frescos that I have seen, which have been not a few, I felt inclined to linger over this the longest. Fading, fainting, vanishing away, as it is, and seeming like a fleeting ghost that one might long to stop and question, it has still enough of attitude and expression left, to make us feel that it has been a very noble work. . . . What sort of vengeance should one have been inclined to take upon the Vandal who cut a door through it? . . . or upon the other Vandals who in 1800 made the walls, on one of which it still lives, a magazine for corn? . . . They say that Francis I., because he could not take the wall away with him, led back the aged artist in his train to Paris, and there cherished him till the end of his days. This does the great king honour, and says more for his taste than all the splendour of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. . . . All that can be now done to preserve the relic, Austria, the conservator, is doing. . . . It will now, at least, die a natural death; and it will yet be long ere the last traces of the expressive outlines are utterly extinct.

An artist was in the room while we were there,

painting, what I presume he intended to call a copy, but it was as fiercely fresh as colouring could make it.

In hearing the name of Francis the First united with that of Leonardo da Vinci, as contemporary, it set me thinking of Holbein; and greatly as I admire the living truth of his portraits, I cannot but marvel at the great distance as to composition, and the whole business of perspective, between the famous Fleming and the great artists of Italy at the same period. . . . It is, however, but a specimen, and a fair one, of the early cinquecento advance of Italy before all the rest of the earth.

Amongst sundry other churches, we visited that of St. Ambrosio partly perhaps for the sake of passing through the doors that the spirited, as well as spiritual, Ambrose shut in the face of Theodosius an act become familiar to us by the aid of Vandyke's fine picture in our precious little National Gallery. . . . But on many accounts this venerable fabric is well worth visiting. You have but to believe its records, in order to persuade yourself that you are surrounded by antiquities that make all you have left behind you of Greece and Rome but the creations of yesterday. Among these, placed respectfully apart, on a column, is a brazen serpent, which you are gravely told was that which Moses raised in the desert; and you are also told that it is expected to hiss violently in the last day. But setting this

aside, as being too holy to comment upon, there are abundance of modern antiques of about a thousand years old or so, that, if genuine, are very curious. Among other highly venerable rubbish, we were shown the fragments of an old bedstead, which we were assured had belonged to the brother of St. Satyrus. Why the bedstead of a saint's brother should be held in such veneration, we were not informed. But the family of this saint must have been throughout, I imagine, peculiarly holy; for, in another part of the church is a very pretty chapel, sacred to his sister, who also had the honour of being promoted to the calendar, by the name of St. Marcellina. Her statue, an offering of modern piety, occupies the centre of the chapel, and is extremely elegant. She is styled in the inscription on her tomb, among many flourishing and complimentary epithets, "Virago," meaning, we must presume, that she was of a manly and dauntless spirit; but my companion seemed to doubt the classical correctness of this term in a laudatory sense.

While following our sacristan guide in and out, through the venerable treasures of this strange old edifice, we passed through a dark and obscure little chapel, in which stood a coffin, covered with a velvet pall besprinkled with gold. I started, from the unexpectedness of the spectacle; upon which our guide, looking at me, said, with a sort of jeering smile, "it is only the body of Monsignore

the bishop, who died yesterday, and will be buried to-morrow?" From thence we passed on to the spot where the bones of the saint had reposed for many yesterdays how little was the interval between them !

* * * * *

I suppose I have been blazée by the galleries of Italy, or else the Pinacotica of Milan was too cold the day on which we visited it, to leave my faculties sufficiently unthawed for admiration for somehow or other I felt as if the pictures were all dead to me, whereas, in fact, I dare say it was I who was dead to them however, even in that defunct state I found something admirable in the Azor of Guercino, and perhaps more still in the Sposalizio of Raphael. . . . But, in fact, we hurried through the rooms at a pace that offered a strong contrast to our movements heretofore on such occasions. I presume, however, that a certain degree of vital warmth is necessary to the exercise of all our functions ; and on the 18th of January, 1842, the thermometer stood too low at Milan to permit any object but the snow from having its full effect upon our eyes.

Nevertheless, all shivering as I was, I would not return to the blazing fire I had left till we had driven to the celebrated triumphal arch leading from the route of the Simplon, commenced by Napoleon, and completed by the Emperor of Austria. It is a splendid erection, and despite the

snow which hung on every part of it, and which was above a foot deep on the road, I longed to pass by it to the great road of which it is the conclusion, instead of making a circuit to Turin for the purpose of repassing by Mont Cenis . . . but this is only an idle thought, for instead of venturing upon a route, now acknowledged to be dangerous at all seasons, from its lamentable want of repair, we are beginning to feel very seriously alarmed lest even Mont Cenis should become impassable by this heavy snow which has been falling almost incessantly ever since we left Florence.

* * * * *

La Scala, the justly admired opera-house of Milan, and which is accounted only second to the San Carlo at Naples, is, indeed, of most magnificent proportions, and, as to scenic decoration, can hardly be exceeded any where . . . but for the fitting up of the theatre, that part of it, I mean, which receives the company, it is hardly possible to conceive any thing less splendid. The drapery of the boxes is composed entirely of flimsy, faded blue calico, edged with a line of dingy red; and this paltry sort of decoration, repeated tier above tier as it is, throughout the whole of the immense area, has an effect so deteriorating as to make it almost impossible to institute any comparison between the poverty-stricken Scala of Milan and the graceful elegance of the San Carlo at Naples . . . though, nevertheless, it

is easy enough to perceive that, if well fitted up, there might be some difficulty in deciding which was the most beautiful.

I had the unexpected gratification of seeing here that admirable actress and very powerful singer, Mademoiselle Loöwe, whom I had the advantage of seeing and hearing some years ago at Vienna. Although she still disdains, as she did then, to avail herself of rouge, or of any other of the ordinary theatrical assistants to beauty, Mademoiselle Loöwe is as lovely as ever, and her fine impressive voice exceedingly improved, being more flexible and more under her command than formerly. . . . So at last I have heard an opera in Italy wherein the prima donna gave me satisfaction! I have been so constantly disappointed during the last ten months at all the opera-houses I have entered *as to the singing*, that I went on this occasion with no other object than to see the house. . . . I had looked at no bill, and knew not that Loöwe was in Italy and great was the effect her voice produced on me by the first notes she uttered as Maria Padilla. The “*Abbracciatemi!*” with which she welcomed her sister Ines thrilled through the house.

I had not recognised her features, not even her magnificent eyes, as her graceful figure approached down the ample stage, and I exclaimed, with almost as much astonishment as if the sounds had reached me in a desert, “Good Heaven! who

is that?" The first glance at the libretto explained the mystery, and prepared me for the real enjoyment that followed. How very greatly does the success of a composer depend on a performer! I may have heard other operas of Donizetti fully equal or superior to Maria Padilla, but certainly never any one that gave me so much pleasure. The energy, the passion, the pathos, with which this admirable performer invested the character of the heroine, were perfectly Siddonian, and rendered the whole representation of it effective in the highest degree. We suffered here, as we have repeatedly done before in Italy, from the very loud chit chat of the audience but I confess that it annoyed me considerably more on this occasion than on any other.

Tomorrow morning we set off for Turin, in order to pass Mount Cenis, if the snow will permit us but from the style in which it is falling now, I have very considerable fears that our return, which, alas! we have already delayed too long, may be still very disagreeably retarded.

* * * * *

Turin, January 20th, 1842.

We have, I am thankful to say, received a favourable report from the office of the mail post. . . . The road is open for sledges, and though the letters have been some hours behind the usual time of arriving, no accident has occurred and so farewell to Italy!

LETTER XXIV.

Arrival at Paris always agreeable. — Miserable Journey over Mont Cenis. — Atelier of M. Healy. — Picture of M. Couture. — Preparing for Home.

Paris, February, 1842.

It is, I believe, impossible to deny, that arrive at Paris when you will, the sight of “la belle ville” is a pleasure. . . . Much as there is that might be better, it is, such as it is, exceedingly delightful, and has, for some reason or other that it might not be very easy to define, more elements within it for making all manner of men, and women too, feel light of heart and gay in spirit, than any other place with which I have the pleasure of being acquainted.

That the reaching it *now* should be more than ever a source of satisfaction, is natural enough for the journey we have made to reach it has been such as it is better to look upon by a backward than a forward glance; and I now bestow this valedictory epistle upon you in the character of guide, anxious to guard you from the pitfalls into which we have been in such danger of tumbling. In very sober earnest, then, I would recommend

all *ladies* whose will and pleasure induces them to cross the Alps, not to attempt performing this exploit in the middle of winter, as we have done ; for not only does it convert what might be very agreeable into what is most exceedingly the reverse, but the chances are greatly in favour of your having to take up your abode for a night or so in one of those picturesque sheds of refuge, which Napoleon has the merit (and no slight one) of having erected, but which are greatly better seen from without than within.

The snow was still falling fast when we set off from Turin, and our first adventure was the downfall of the leader upon which the postillion rode ; by which accident the poor fellow injured his leg so severely that it was necessary to send him back to the last post-house ; upon which we turned round again and returned too, because our conductor had also received some injury while extricating the postillion, which would have made it very desirable for him to avoid the severe work he was upon, if he could have had the good fortune to find any one at the post-house to whom he could have resigned his trust. But in this hope he was disappointed ; and, after very considerable delay, we set off again, our poor conductor looking sadly pale. . . . But he behaved with admirable courage and resolution ; for though it was painfully evident that he suffered, he would not accept the substitute offered by the landlord, “ because the road might

happen to be difficult." . . . and *difficult* enough it was, Heaven knows! . . . The snow continued to fall without ceasing, and we were told by all whom we questioned, and that was exactly every body we could see, that it was the heaviest fall they had had for many years.

About an hour and a half after passing Susa we got upon a sledge. It was now as dark as a moon rather more than half full would let it be, and anything more dismal than the operation of leaving the comfortable coupé of the mail post carriage, to get into the machine by which we were to pass the mountain, cannot easily be imagined. In the first place, the miserable box was half full of snow, and therefore, though lined throughout with woollen serge, we were but little better off than if we had been packed in a wheelbarrow. Some portion of this chill-looking cushioning was indeed laded out with spades, and the gigantic cantonniers who performed this service for us were, moreover, as civil as possible; but they declared that no precaution that they had the power of taking could prevent the snow from entering; so our only chance of not having to sit for many hours in water arose from the hope that we might be sitting in ice instead! From this point of the passage we were accompanied by a guard of cantonniers, each one carrying an enormous wooden spade, who marched, or rather waded along on each side of us. These mountaineers appeared to me to be positively a race of giants; their strangely wild costume and

enormous caps, might somewhat assist this colossal appearance, but I certainly never saw such prodigiously tall and stout men, . . . and yet, poor fellows, it seemed quite as much as they could do to get along.

As one or more of these friendly monsters leant occasionally upon the open window of the sledge, I sought courage, by questioning them, in the hope that I should hear them reiterate the often repeated assurance we had so gladly listened to *en route*, that the passage of Mount Cenis was always safe . . . but I was disappointed. They acknowledged, indeed, that the enormous quantity of snow which had fallen, and was falling still, was very *unusual*, but that there was one point at which the passage in winter was almost always attended with risk of an avalanche. Oh! what a blessing is ignorance now and then! . . . We reached this dreadful point, but happily knew it not. . . The cantonniers left the side of the sledge, there was no one to question, and we perceived nothing through the dimness and the falling snow that we had not seen before . . . excepting that there, exactly there, in the very middle of the hundred yards or so within which the danger lay, and over which, as the courier told us afterwards, he had hoped to get in a few seconds, we overtook a forsaken carriage . . . easily overtaken, in truth, for it was at a dead stand-still, having diverged an inch or two from the narrow track, and thus become

completely snow-locked. In perfect silence, for though eagerly listening, I heard not a sound, our sturdy spademen set to work, and we were soon enabled to proceed, without having the least idea of the unfortunate locality of the impediment till long after we had passed it.

I have more than once been, or fancied myself, in danger, when there was just sufficient excitement from it to make it a matter of doubt afterwards whether the sensation had been made up with more of pleasure or of pain. But not so of this midnight passage of Mount Cenis. Surrounded as we were by stout-hearted men, fearless alike by nature and by habit, there was not one who uttered a cheering word excepting, indeed, when one of the poor fellows at the carriage window, as he painfully dragged his limbs from out the snow, exclaimed, “Au moins, Dieu merci ! nous n’avons pas *le tourment*.”

“What *tourment*, friend ?” said I.

“Le vent, Madame ! Le vent !” he replied, in a sort of gentle growl, “si’il avait du vent avec le neige que tombe ce soir” And there he stopped, leaving me to guess the rest.

Fortunate, indeed, was it that we had not this “*tourment*,” as it is familiarly called, for it often renders the winter passage full of danger and difficulty, even when no snow is actually falling ; but had this dreaded wind arisen amidst the ceaseless snow-storm which accompanied us throughout

the whole passage, it would have become absolutely necessary to take shelter in one of the sheds of refuge till it had ceased ; . . . for not only would

“ *La bufera infernal che mai non resta* ”

have been hard to bear, but the drifting of every moment, such as to render the passage impracticable.

The only word which, after beginning the ascent, I heard uttered in that accent of gaiety which one hopes for from a Savoyard as well as from a Frenchman, was from the courier of the mail post which we met, just after we began to climb. . . . The two carriages stopped, and exchanged greetings, our courier enquiring with some anxiety of the other, what sort of journey he had had. . . . “ *Vous voulez savoir, mon cher ?* ” was the laughing reply. . . . “ *Allez ! . . . vous n’êtes pas encore à Lans-le-bourg, voyez vous, et vous allez vous amuser joliment. Bon soir.* ” . . . And on they drove, triumphant at having done what we had still to do. But though this was uttered in the most sprightly manner imaginable, it was about as pleasant to listen to as the jokes of Petit André when preparing one of his “play-fellows” for the gallows . . . and his gaiety made my heart sink within me. I will not pretend to deny, that during the worst part of our progress towards this haven at Lans-le-bourg, I was very seriously frightened, yet, nevertheless, I was not wholly insensible to the

strange magnificence of the scene. It was, as I have said, moonlight, a fact which just made itself sufficiently perceptible athwart the thick white atmosphere through which we were moving to enable the eye to catch from time to time the giant walls of snow on either hand, and occasionally the deep, deep valleys beneath us . . . all grimly, horribly, dimly, dreamily white . . . while in many a chasm darkness seemed to nestle, the blacker from the contrast.

Our path, both behind and in advance, was repeatedly marked during the passage by long lines of soldiers, on their midnight march. There must have been a whole regiment, and a large one. . . . But why this inclement season or this dreary hour was chosen for their removal, I know not. Poor fellows! . . . They looked miserable enough! . . . Yet I felt, as I watched them, that they probably felt much more at their ease than I did.

* * * * *

After all this, you will readily believe that we were glad enough to find ourselves once more in Paris, and that the distance thence to Cumberland seemed but an easy stage . . . nor was the little halt, which I, at least, felt absolutely necessary to restore my strength, passed idly. There were dear friends to see, and perils and pleasures to be talked over. . . . Moreover, I was not so weary of looking at pictures as not gladly to accept an invitation to visit the *atelier* of that very clever

artist, Mr. Healy. This young American is another proof that, however slow the progress of art may seem to be in the United States, it is no want of *native talent* that occasions it. When more of the commercial wealth of American magnates is devoted to the patronage of sculptors and painters, a very brilliant knot of their own countrymen will be found ready, and most perfectly able, to remove the imputation which has hitherto lain rather heavily upon the country, of paying too little attention to the graces and refinements of life.

In Mr. Healy's rooms, and pointed out, by the way, much more zealously than any of his own works, I saw an exceedingly clever picture by a young French artist of the name of Couture a name quite unknown to me, but which, I should think, promised fairly to become, ere long, well known to us all.

* * * * *

And now, then, I must bid you adieu, and prepare to set off upon the last easy stage of our long journey eager enough to return to those I left at home, and shall meet them —

“Come color che vanno,
Con cosa in capo non da lor saputa.”

THE END.

LONDON:

Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

